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Centring LGBT2QIA+ Subjects in Knowledge Organization Systems

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Abstract

This paper details two interdependent knowledge organization projects for an LGBT2QIA+ library. The authors, in the context of volunteer library work for an independent library, redesigned the classification system and subject cataloguing guidelines to centre LGBT2QIA+ subjects. We discuss the priorities of creating and maintaining knowledge organization systems for a historically marginalized community and address the challenge that queer subjectivity poses to the goals of knowledge organization. The classification system features a focus on identity and physically reorganizes the library space in a way that accounts for the multiple and overlapping labels that constitute the currently articulated boundaries of this community. The subject heading system focuses on making visible topics and elements of identity made invisible by universal systems and by the newly implemented classification system. We discuss how this project may inform knowledge organization for other marginalized subjects, particularly through process and documentation that prioritizes transparency and the acceptance of an unfinished endpoint for queer knowledge organization.

1. Introduction

LGBT2QIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, 2-spirited, queer, intersex, asexual, and nonbinary) subjects are ill-served by the universal systems of classification and subject access that currently dominate libraries and cultural heritage institutions. Here we employ the notion of "subjects" with deliberate ambiguity. Knowledge organization systems, including classification systems and subject cataloguing, have historically placed and defined topics such as homosexuality and gender non-conformity as types of mental illness and social deviance (for an extended discussion, see Adler, 2017). These subjects-as-aboutness emerge from the literature as library collections reflect the historical medicalization and pathologization of sexualities and gender identities outside a cisnormative and heteronormative patriarchal framework. In turn, knowledge organization systems and their libraries fail LGBT2QIA+ communities as they instantiate and reaffirm the discrimination patrons experience in other

aspects of their lives—addressing one's information needs regarding sexuality and gender identity may mean finding oneself in between autoerotic asphyxia and child molesting (LCC RC560.B56). We subjects-as-members have not had an authoritative position in the creation of the knowledge organization schemas that determine how we and our cisgender and heterosexual peers find information in the library. Indeed, even as library workers, LGBT2QIA+ individuals encounter systems that resist accountability to their lived experiences (see Nectoux 2011).

The marginalization of LGBT2QIA+ subjects occurs within the larger scope of knowledge organization systems' privileging of the majority or normative viewpoint. Berman (1979) and Olson and Schlegl (2002) document how current, dominant systems disenfranchise minoritized populations not only by virtue of discriminatory, out-of-date, and pathologizing terminology, but also through the fixed structures and modes of authority and meaning they enact. We draw attention the names and locations of subjects because "the categories that designate what library books are about actively produce, reproduce, and privilege certain subjects and disciplinary norms" (Adler 2017, p. 2). Furthermore, we consider the structures within which subjects are named and controlled as these instantiate particular theories of knowledge and being (Olson 2004) incompatible with certain subjects and lived experiences.

In considering how knowledge organization structures might better serve LGBT2QIA+ subjects, we as designers of these systems struggle with whether existing tools are compatible with lived experience of sexuality and gender. In this contested space, we explore the question: "To what degree do knowledge organization systems facilitate and restrict queer forms of culturally-based meaning and interest?" More specifically, we examine tools and functionalities among knowledge organization systems that may facilitate queer identity and meaning. Here we report on the challenges to representing queer subjects in knowledge organization systems and document two approaches within a single library to remedy historical discrimination, bias, and distortion of queer subjects. Our setting is an exemplar for such a question: rather than finding space within or subverting a dominant, universal system (as in Olson, 1998) we begin in a library made for, run by, and answerable only to the local LGBT2QIA+ community.

2. Background

2.1 Related Work

In light of foundational gender and queer theory, particularly via Sedgwick (1990), we recognize that affirmative identification and the adoption of labels are necessary tools to claim space and power within a sexist, cisnormative, and heteronormative culture while also necessarily being contradictions to lived experiences within the LGBT2QIA+ community; we need labels and we need to acknowledge that labels are always already distortions. In this framework, individuals within the LGBT2QIA+ umbrella are unified not only by a shared experience of marginalization but also by an orientation against fixity or normality among identities. In this paper, we use the initialism "LGBT2QIA+" when referring to the community of individuals identifying with one or more of the collected labels; we use "queer" as an adjective or verb when discussing the discursive practice characteristic of these collected identities to challenge normative structures of identity. The same contrast is summarized in the community's protest slogan, "Not gay as in happy but queer as in 'fuck you.'"

Scholars in knowledge organization have taken up the examination of this duality of categories and their application to marginalized sexualities and genders. Particularly generative for our framing of interventions into this space, Drabinski (2013) contrasts two tactics in queering the catalogue: first, to correct the terminology and continually align our controlled vocabularies and classification labels with more respectful language and second, more radically, to challenge the notion of fixed categories and objective labels as being at all compatible with queer subjectivity.

The question, "are user-focused standards likely to be objective?" (Olsen & Schlegel, 2001, p. 76) as well as Feinberg's discussion of responsible bias (2007), inspired us to discard the pretence of neutrality in favour of a system based on context, one that is equitable rather than equal. In Drabinski's terms, this would suggest a notably queer solution "built to highlight and exploit the ruptures in our classification structures" (Drabinski, 2013, p. 96-97). Butler's discussion of language, that categories and

abstractions can, "effect a physical and material violence against the bodies they claim to organize and interpret," (Butler, 1990, p. 116) inspired deliberation and care in the creation processes. The many critiques of shortcomings within Library of Congress Classification (LCC) and Subject Headings (LCSH), notably Adler (2017), have detailed practices to avoid in knowledge organization for LGBT2QIA+ subjects. Several chapters within Greenblatt's (2010) *Serving LGBTQ Library and Archives Users* note how recently pejorative terminology was still used and alerted us to the danger of basing our decisions primarily on literary warrant as LCSH does.

2.1 Out on the Shelves

The site of our work was Out on the Shelves (OOTS), a library with a mission to "foster a free, accessible, and safe space for LGBT2QIA+ people and their allies to discover and share stories and resources centering on LGBT2QIA+ experiences" (About: Out On The Shelves). Located on the University of British Columbia (UBC) campus and the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) People, the library is an independently-operated, volunteer-run initiative and is the largest LGBT2QIA+ library in Western Canada.

Out on the Shelves Library has existed in Vancouver in various locations and forms since 1983. Its move to the University of British Columbia was a recent and necessary one, as the library had been forced out of its previous location in 2015 and spent approximately two years scattered in boxes in garages across the city before finding a new home. This move was accomplished with the assistance of The Pride Collective at UBC, a Resource Group for gender and sexual diversity, which enabled the library to partner with the Resource Groups on campus. This partnership takes the form of the library jointly housing various materials from the Resource Groups alongside their own collections in exchange for the physical space itself. During the re-shelving and implementation portion of the classification project, these materials from the Resource Groups (which are not catalogued and non-circulating) were also re-shelved to facilitate a clearer separation between circulating and non-circulating materials. It should be noted that although the library is located on UBC's campus, and has collaborated with

university initiatives and departments, it is not officially affiliated with the university or the university libraries. As we note below in the context of an environmental scan of classification systems for LGBT2QIA+ collections, many such libraries find themselves in similarly tenuous relationships of stewardship, location, and independence among academic institutions and local activist and community groups (e.g., Keim, 2008). We especially note the centrality of student labour and student activism to the initial impetus and ongoing support of such institutions. Two of the authors of this paper were graduate student volunteers at OOTS who began working with the library just after its move to the new location. They led the work of the classification and cataloguing projects detailed below in their roles as volunteer staff.

In the following two sections we outline the two key knowledge organization projects for OOTS: a classification project to redesign labelling and shelf order and a subject headings project to revise subject cataloguing procedures. These two projects addressed sets of overlapping challenges in representing LGBT2QIA+ collections. In some regards, correcting bias or distortion in one system required compensating actions in the other to avoid creating new silences.

3. Classification project

The classification project began by reviewing previously documented queer issues in knowledge organization. The research clarified several goals for changes to the classification system: that it be updated to reflect current language, be logically ordered and arranged, function as a living system, and create a historical record of the system's evolution. It is important to note that much of the existing research on knowledge organization for LGBT2QIA+ subjects features critiques of existing systems (Adler, 2017), or focuses on subject cataloguing (Drucker, 2017) and archival representations (Latimer, 2013), and was therefore only tangentially related to the actual process of building a new classification system in a queer context.

Major concerns with the previous labelling and shelf order system for OOTS were features which reflected harmful and outdated assumptions. By naming separate classes for "Lesbian Interest," "Bisexual Interest," and "Transgender" the previous system implied that gay, cisgender, male interest was the default. Furthermore, by not naming or creating space for identities such as Two-Spirit and Asexual, among others, the previous classification system was complicit in the erasure of these identities. Arranged alphabetically by class for simplicity and discoverability, OOTS's previous classification system also hindered the collocation of similar topics, therefore missing opportunities to create meaningful relationships and serendipity in browsing and discovery. There was no explicit hierarchical structure. Classes like "Queer Culture" and "Coming Out" or "International LGBT" and "Lesbian Interest" could not achieve mutual exclusivity and created ambiguities for cataloguing and retrieval. Furthermore, several other classification codes and spine labels had haphazardly fallen out of use due to inconsistent application. Several of these issues understandably stemmed from the library's history, built up by community donations over decades and run by volunteers often with no formal background or exposure to knowledge organization for libraries. Previously located under a parent organization, OOTS and its volunteer staff lacked the ability to make radical changes to the system before the library gained independent status.

After summarizing the status of the pre-existing system and noting its various shortcomings, we began the research phase of the process. Consisting primarily of readings in the realm of queer theory and knowledge organization, this research helped to formulate a proposal for a new classification system which was then put forward for review by the volunteer staff at OOTS. Volunteers were notified of the project via Basecamp, the library's internal communications system, as well as by email. They were asked to provide feedback on all aspects of the project at this formative stage. Responses were shared in online document commenting, which allowed for conversational engagement over multiple weeks. General feedback was positive, as volunteers and community members who responded showed excitement that the project was moving forwards. Comments on specific aspects, such as how multiple and complex

identities or intersectionalities could be adequately represented and without being reductive or essentialist, were concerns which echoed questions that we had been considering. We took this to be a positive sign, as it showed the volunteers cared about the same issues we were hoping to address. Additional feedback included enthusiasm for the creation of wayfinding devices and openly accessible versions of the new classification system which would both aid navigation and help ensure transparency.

After incorporating this feedback from the volunteers we continued the research process with an eye towards more concrete examples of modified or independently created classification systems in queer contexts. Generally, despite there being interest in, and acknowledgment of, the need for more flexible structures within specialized domains and marginalized communities, the time and funding simply has not existed in most cases to create those concrete structures. As previously mentioned, most existing research is only tangentially related to the actual process of building a new classification system in a queer library. Therefore we also sought alternative approaches. Within the North American context there are several other small, independent, public libraries centred on queer content and LGBT2QIA+ communities that we looked to for context and guidance, which we document in Figure 1. The most relevant include Quatrefoil Library in Minneapolis, The Lavender Library, Archives, and Cultural Exchange (LLACE) in Sacramento, and La Bibliothèque à Livres Ouvert in Montréal. Among these three libraries, Quatrefoil used a slightly adjusted LCC and La Bibliothèque à Livres Ouvert used a more substantially modified version of DDC, "Classification décimale Dewey adaptée aux réalités LGBT" or "Dewey decimal classification adapted to LGBT realities." LLACE used a third, entirely different alphanumeric system. Although it was encouraging to see the various ways these other libraries were able to adapt these systems to their own needs, they were all still too large and complex for OOTS's needs. As we were hoping to build a local, contextual system, we also reached out to two local, alternative bookstores (Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium and Spartacus Books) to get a sense of how their shelving systems were constructed and how they evolved over time.
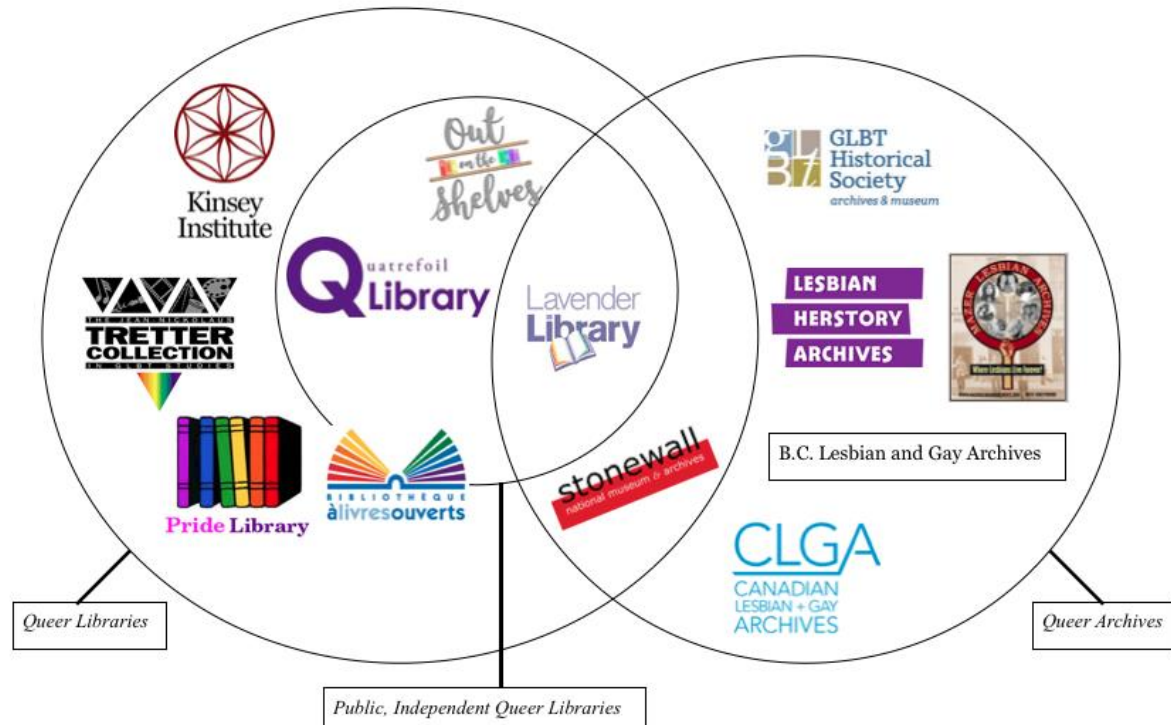
Figure 1 Queer & LGBT2QIA+ Libraies and Archives

After sketching several preliminary options for the basic structure of the new system, we picked two to explore more thoroughly: a subject-based system and an identity-based system. First, the subject-based system granted the most flexibility and even distribution in terms of what and how materials could be represented. There was nothing, however, in this perspective that explicitly spoke to and valued LGBT2QIA+ lives and experiences but still plenty that could help perpetuate unwelcome societal norms. Endorsing a perspective that would not privilege the community of the library felt like a failure to engage with the central purpose of this project. The second system was quite the reverse: an identity-based system that took the acronym "LGBT2QIA" as its primary level of division. However, this perspective quickly revealed itself to be equally if not more flawed than the first. Its primary shortcoming was the impossibility of maintaining mutual exclusivity while representing intersectional identities with any degree of accuracy, which therefore made this system untenable despite its value in centring queerness.

After considering these contradictions and discarding all other possible options, a compromise was reached by melding the two systems together. "Identity" became a new class within the subject-based system which had since undergone several revisions. An overview of the entire system is diagrammed in Figure 2. The merger of these two approaches, combined with clear, comprehensive class definitions and cataloguing instructions had the potential to richly represent the range of materials and subjects in the collection without minimizing the visibility and centrality of LGBT2QIA+ content. To address the impossibility of mutual exclusivity among gender and sexual identities, we limited the identity class to items overwhelmingly about a single facet of identity, as we detail in cataloguing instructions for the new system:

> Only place items within an "ID" subclass if they are overwhelmingly about ONE of the subcategories. […] For example, if a book on asexual lesbians was also about how people at this intersection of identities navigate the dating scene it would be classed as "LIV-RRS". Furthermore, although collections of essays about coming out as bisexual would be placed under "ID-B", an anthology of fictional short stories with bisexual themes or by bisexual authors would simply be labeled "FIC".

We return to this concept of identity in the Discussion section below.

With an awareness that we had chosen to privilege a queer perspective at the expense of others, we chose at this point to transform the library's use of spine labels away from gatekeeping and towards enabling discovery. The two classes of materials which had been identified with spine labels in the past were the Erotica and Youth collections, which aside from allowing these items to be recognizable from a distance, the authors found to be a profoundly useless identification as both Erotica and Youth Fiction already had (and would maintain in the new system) their own classes and therefore their own shelf locations. The spine labels did not, therefore, create new or valuable experiences for any library user but

had the potential to dissuade circulation of materials with such a prominent marker of stigmatized genres.

Far more productive (and disruptive) was to identify a perspective that, by the nature of hierarchical

classification systems, had been dispersed throughout the collection. We chose to use spine labels to

identify #OwnVoices content, aligning the library's system with an ongoing movement to recognize

works written by unrepresented persons related to their own identities, in contrast to books written on

marginalized subjects from outside those experiences (Duyvis, n.d.). In our implementation of this

system, we created spine labels to identify works by Indigenous authors and people of colour. This is a

subversion within the hierarchical system that greatly increases the visibility of these otherwise dispersed

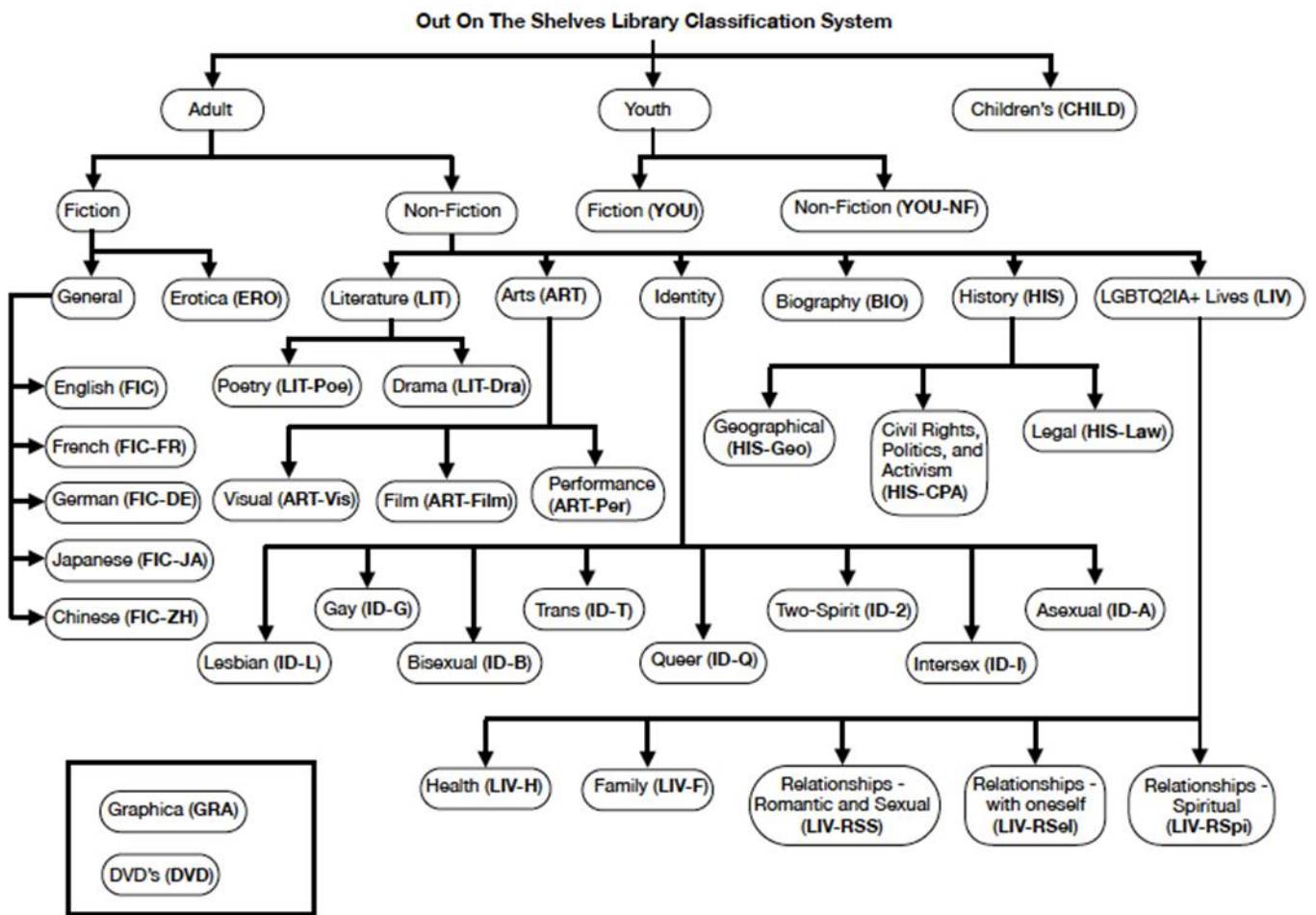items—an effect that did not exist with the previous application of spine labels.

Figure 2 New Classification System Diagram

As previously stated, there were four primary goals for the new system: that it be updated to reflect current language, logically ordered and arranged, function as a living system, and that it create a historical record of the system's evolution. The first goal was partially accomplished by adding categories such as "Queer" and "Intersex," as well as altering pre-existing categories such as "Bisexual" and "Transgender" to be more inclusive by naming them, "Bi and Pansexual" and "Trans and Genderqueer," respectively. To improve the logical order and arrangement of the collection, subjects such as "Visual Art" and "Performance Art" which had previously been shelved at opposite sides of the library were now collocated under the same broader heading "Arts and Entertainment." Another deliberate decision was to place Biographies in between Identity and History in order to make a clear connection between history as an abstract concept, and the real people (and well known labels) of today. We felt that biographies, as stories of real people throughout history identifying across the entire spectrum of gender, sexuality, and human experience, were hopeful connections to make, and especially meaningful due to the nature of the queer community where representation has often been hard to find, history lost or destroyed, and generational inheritance of culture has been disrupted.

With regards to the third and fourth goals, we created a document that tracks the creation of the new system and lists clear instructions for how to make and record future modifications. This document is freely accessible to all OOTS volunteers. We hope that by recording updates to the classification system volunteers and community members, now and in the future, will be able to understand how and why the system came to be the way it is. A transparent and historical record is meant to empower future volunteers and community members to continue to make changes that reflect changing needs and perspectives.

We created an implementation process intended to take place over four sessions during the fall of 2018. These re-cataloguing, re-classification, and re-shelving sessions gathered a group of volunteers for at least five hours on weekends to complete a set amount of categories each session. This process was successful and was completed on-time with all materials re-catalogued and re-shelved by mid-December 2018. As many library volunteers contributed to this process they were able to give additional feedback as

they interacted with the new system for the first time. This led to the first modifications to the system: a Spanish language class for materials which had been previously misidentified as French and a new section of "Critical Essays."

The intent of this project was to build a practical system that was more reflective of the mission and values of Out On The Shelves Library; imperfect, but intended to be as inclusive and transparent as possible while incorporating clear pathways for future modifications. It is expected to create a welcoming and accessible browsing experience, enhanced by its deliberate consideration of the physical space in its design, and which explicitly privileges queer perspectives. Outside of the initial time and labour required to implement the classification system, we do not expect its ongoing maintenance to place any additional burdens on the volunteer staff as we made specific efforts to keep the system at a small and manageable scale.

4. Subject headings project

A second, complementary project to address subject access outside the classification system focused on subjects in the catalogue records. The OOTS online public access catalogue (OPAC) displayed subject headings from each item's bibliographic record alongside any user tags that were generated for the item by patrons. Even with only 48 tags, the user tagging system was already experiencing issues common to open folksonomies (Munk & Mørk, 2007; Noruzi, 2006), the most prominent of which were inconsistencies related to typos and grammar. One item in the collection was tagged "lebian", while a few others were tagged "Lesbian." "Trans" and "transgender" were applied to various books, as were both "YA" and "Youth." The tag "best_cover" used an underscore, while other tags used spaces between words.

The library's practice of copy cataloguing also raised major concerns regarding issues of inconsistency, bias, and inaccuracy; imported records often contained outdated and/or offensive terminology or no subject headings at all. Many of the changes made to LGBT2QIA+ and queer-related

LCSH terms have been made relatively recently. An imported record could have been made and/or imported at any time and may have included terms that are no longer in use. While items related to gender identity typically received a heading incorporating the terminology of "transgender," "transvestite," or "transsexual," the terms themselves had no internal consistency within the system, revealing the impact of cataloguer subjectivity and bias within OOTS and throughout the LCSH. Practically, these kinds of inconsistencies damaged both the precision and recall capabilities of retrieval by subject and keyword search. These problems were also ethically troublesome for OOTS and its mission. The inadequacies of the system limited the library's ability to provide access and representation for LGBT2QIA+ community members.

The cataloguing project began with a review of criticism, analysis, and alternative uses of bibliographic subject access, particularly from LGBT2QIA+ perspectives (Campbell, 2000; Drabinski, 2013) and especially in relation to online applications (Adler, 2013; Keilty, 2012). This review established a foundational understanding that despite traditional claims of objectivity, all systems will reflect the perspectives and biases of those who develop them. Instead of assuming or attempting to work from a neutral position, the project intentionally centred OOTS' community, collection, and mission in all decisions. In an iterative process of discussion and feedback with library volunteers (parallel to the feedback cycle for the classification project, above), the review phase of the cataloguing project helped establish the priorities for a new system: retrieval; non-offensive terminology; inclusivity and plurality; and adaptability.

The goal of retrieval focused on a balance between precision and recall within the context of LGBT2QIA+ subjectivity, wherein description and access to information are both closely tied to personal identity and belonging. Non-offensive terminology as a goal conceptualized the library's digital platforms as an extension of the library's mission "to foster a free, accessible, and safe space for LGBT2QIA+ people and their allies to discover and share stories and resources centring on LGBT2QIA+ experiences." This value grounded our interventions in a principle of harm reduction for a user base which has typically

faced marginalization and exposure to trauma within information access frameworks, considering an ethic of care over objective fairness (Held 2006, Fox & Reece 2012). Inclusivity and plurality also centred the library's core values, recognizing that a commitment to inclusion of all members of the community mandates a pluralistic approach that embraces diverse experiences and opinions. Mai's (2011) exploration of shifts in the priorities of knowledge organization brought on by folksonomies and other concepts of democratic indexing informed our approach: while knowledge organization systems began with the goal of universality, some areas in the field have developed to accept situational and pluralistic organization. Mai argued that "[i]n situations where a plurality of viewpoints is celebrated, consistency would not be an appropriate measure of quality" (116). A successful pluralistic system would be welcoming and flexible for all users. Adaptability as a goal aimed to address the longevity of our interventions. As Drabinski (2013) noted, corrections to subject heading terminology to make it more appropriate "are always contingent and never final, shifting in response to discursive and political and social change" (100). Premised on this critique, we chose to emphasise adaptability as a necessary component in order to continue meeting our other goals as well.

Four possible solutions were developed along a spectrum of comprehensiveness, each comprised of a subject heading solution and a social tagging solution to be employed in tandem to balance control and inclusivity. Details of these options are outlined in Table 1.

	Subject Headings	Tagging
Option 1: "Simple"	Import bibliographic records *only* from approved institutions with shared missions.	Implementation of "suggested tags" function, minimal volunteer tag moderation for control of grammar and spelling.
Option 2: "Reasonable"	Using LCSH and imported records, establish guidelines to make sure headings related to LGBT2QIA+ topics are up to date and consistent. Re-catalogue existing records.	Require volunteer approval of all new tags.
Option 3: "Complex"	Creation of local subject headings for LGBT2QIA+ topics. Re-catalogue existing	Open tagging with minimal volunteer tag intervention for control of

	records.	grammar and spelling.
Option 4: "Ambitious"	Creation of local subject headings for LGBT2QIA+ topics based on terminology in the OOTS tagging system.	Open tagging with minimal intervention. Programming to encourage more extensive use of tags, to support feasibility of local SH system.

Table 1: Options as outlined in "Out On The Shelves: Online Catalogue Classification Review/Proposal"

We presented these options in a report on the project thus far and solicited feedback from library volunteers. Responses were shared in online document commenting, which allowed for conversational engagement over multiple weeks. Feedback focused on option preferences and achievability. In addition to this feedback, regular updates were also shared at organizational meetings and met with general support.

Option 3, the creation of local subject headings for LGBT2QIA+ topics, re-cataloguing existing records, and leaving open tagging with minimal volunteer tag intervention for control of grammar and spelling, was unanimously chosen as the ideal solution. One volunteer's feedback on the document characterized the support behind this option: "I feel like we need our own terminology & thesaurus to really take the next step as an organization." Volunteers recognized that Option 2, using LCSH and imported records, establishing guidelines to make sure headings related to LGBT2QIA+ topics are up to date and consistent, re-cataloguing existing records, and requiring volunteer approval of all new tags, was also acceptable and more realistic. Another volunteer suggested merging the subject heading solution from Option 3 with the tagging solution Option 2; this would in effect create more work, but the volunteer felt motivated to avoid abusive and harmful tags that could arise without moderation. Option 4, the creation of local subject headings for LGBT2QIA+ topics based on terminology in the OOTS tagging system, was seen as too ambitious but volunteers supported keeping it in mind for future development. All of the volunteers who provided feedback recognized that the proposed solutions would each require some added work, expanding the scope of both training and volunteer shifts. Volunteers were generally open to expanding their labour, especially if it would be incorporated into existing committed time.

Following feedback from library volunteers we then produced a set of guidelines and approved subject headings for enhancement of copy-cataloguing records, as well as guidelines for moderating user tags and opportunities for expanding the tagging system in the future. With this new system, the cataloguing process includes reviewing subject headings and ensuring that gender and sexuality are addressed critically and appropriately. The guidelines highlight currently "approved" tags along with alternatives to questionable terminology, which should help volunteers (many of whom do not have any library experience) gain familiarity with basic principles of subject access and how they can be applied equitably. We based the development of these guidelines, including examples and priorities, on analysis of the current subject headings applied to items in our collection.

As an example of how the new cataloguing guidelines address existing headings and copy cataloguing, we identified a significant issue with subject headings containing the terminology "homosexuals" and "gays." Each of these terms had been applied inconsistently to denote either gay men specifically or all homosexual people in general. This ambiguity resulted in a conflation of gay male identity with the queer community as a whole, similar to the phenomenon found in shelf labelling and order before re-classification. As a solution, the guidelines ask volunteers to replace general headings with headings for specific identities when an item is predominantly talking about those groups and experiences. More general headings are acceptable in some situations; we do not want users to doubt why an item is included in the collection. Therefore, headings should match the level of specificity in the item itself. A post-coordination approach was chosen to address our finding that many pre-coordinated headings were ambiguous when applied in the system and to account for inconsistencies in LCSH syntax familiarity among volunteers. In the new guidelines, for example, books on the history of gay men participating in theatre should have two headings: "Gay men" and "Drama," while specifying that books of plays about gay men should have one: "Gay men--Drama."

Some guidelines were developed specifically to supplement the changes made to the classification system, particularly to ensure that the catalogue record indicate subjects and genres no

longer explicit in the classification scheme. The guidelines present the heading "Coming out" (a simplification of the LCSH "Coming out (Sexual orientation)") for relevant titles. This unites items under a subject which had been removed from our classification system and incorporated into other, broader classes. The guidelines also ask volunteers to use headings to differentiate between biographies and autobiographies, which were shelved in the same section in the new system. Other headings require critical judgement from the volunteer on an item-to-item basis. For example, "Sexual behaviour" is frequently applied to items due to the sexualization of queer identity, not because sex is a prominent part of the item. Our guidelines recommend changing the heading to "Sex" in order to avoid overly formal, medicalizing language, and we advise volunteers to consider whether this heading in copy cataloguing is relevant to the item, giving the volunteer discretion to remove it if not.

The cataloguing guidelines also prioritize subjects referring to identity that were not sufficiently addressed in the prior shelf order and labelling system, the new classification, nor the majority of copy cataloguing. The current guidelines suggest that volunteers check for author statements within the item that explicitly name a sexual or gender identity and to consider adding a subject such as "lesbian creator" or "Anishinaabe creator." This approach to highlighting identity in authorship reflects the #OwnVoices perspective in the spine labels from the new classification system. While a fully local cataloguing system might locate such information in authority records for authors, this approach recognizes the copy cataloguing environment from the Library of Congress rarely documents these aspects of identity and not in a way that facilitates filtering and retrieval of items. Stretching the boundaries of subject headings to refer to author identity bends the rules in order to respect the community's concerns and information needs. We detail a further bending of the rules regarding identity in cataloguing in the Identity section below.

The development of the guidelines has been an ongoing process of analysis, conceptualization, and consultation. Upon completion, the proposed guidelines will be presented to volunteers for feedback and approval. We anticipate that application of these guidelines will be a gradual process based on

volunteer availability and enthusiasm for advanced cataloguing training. Implementation will require volunteers to dedicate a portion of their shifts to editing existing records according to the guidelines; retroactive cataloguing is a viable option due to the small size of our collection, volunteer commitment to the project, and the distributed nature of this work. A committed effort to establish the new subject heading system should further the library's goals to make our online space helpful and accessible to all our community members. As a result of these changes, the library hopes to improve the overall usability of the OPAC and rework the power dynamics within classification to allow for community self-definition.

5. Discussion

These two projects engaged different knowledge organization systems while taking parallel approaches to centring LGBT2QIA+ subjects. In the following sections we summarize the common framework of these two projects and the projects' interdependence with particular focus on the concept of identity. In describing the approaches here, it is worth repeating an important contextual detail about our work at OOTS—as a community-led, independent library staffed by volunteers, radical redesign of knowledge organization systems were limited only by the available attention, labour, and expertise of volunteer leads and the consent of the community and remaining volunteer staff. Some elements of our approach, such as a focus on transparency and the accumulation of historical information about process, may be generalizable to other contexts while others, such as the extent of the classification redesign, may be less feasible for libraries embedded in other institutional environments and with a mandate for interoperability with other systems.

5.1 Project summary

These two projects—the classification project and the subject cataloguing project—focus on the community values, process documentation, and acknowledgement of fallibility and impermanence in even the most well-intentioned systems. Though we have presented each project separately in this account, the projects were inherently interdependent of each other and proceeded in coordination. In

particular, distinctions among subjects and genres that the new classification system removed from shelf order were intentionally prioritized in subject cataloguing guidelines. The requirements that each project had on staff input and labour were complementary, as the progression from general input to proposal to feedback to implementation proceeded across each project in a regular fashion, giving volunteers a view of the full scope of the changes to the library while asking for incremental attention to particular stages.

Both projects have created extensive documentation designed for transparency to the library's community for the internal history of OOTS. Public-facing documentation, such as the library space map that orients visitors to the shelving system, list relevant dates of implementation. This provides temporal context to changes as well as leaving traces of the system's designed nature; we wish to leave a system that matches the community's needs without allowing the system itself to seem inevitable or outside the processes of human attention and design. Internal guidelines similarly feature dates and include appendices of processes and alternatives considered and not pursued. We hope that by providing the library with candid documentation of the thought and labour that went into the new implemented systems future volunteers will feel empowered to reimagine the library otherwise and to undertake their own exhaustive reconsiderations of knowledge organization for the collection. This approach to transparency is in part a matter of personal humility; we do not assert that the newly implemented systems are the only approaches that could work for this collection. However, this transparency is also enacted out of professional humility; following Drabinski (2013) and the characterization of queer subjects and continually undermining the goals of traditional knowledge organization, we set up not only new knowledge organization systems but an invitation to continually question and undo them. The shifting nature of labels in this community is not a difficulty to be overcome by better knowledge organization design but a rejection of any endpoint to design.

These projects use elements of design and construction from established knowledge organization to express queer subjectivity; we did not invent new modalities of shelf order or syntax for subject headings but instead found room within familiar logics for decisions that fit this community's perspective.

Ideally, such changes may go as far as to constitute a critical and liberating act among the LGBT2QIA+ community. As designers of knowledge organization systems for historically marginalized subjects, we found that bending some rules and assumptions of classification logic and cataloguing standardization was sufficient to reshape the system for representation. In this approach we attempted to enact humility and transparency in design and for ongoing maintenance.

5.2 Identity

Adler (2013) and Keilty (2012) have explored the ways in which identity is negotiated among online communities using tagging systems. Keilty's inquiry into tagging within the prescribed classification of Xtube is an important reminder that "folksonomies offer an emancipatory potential against authoritative or prescribed notions of gender and sexuality, but such potential always occurs within a scene of constraint" (323). This constraint can be cultural and embedded in our daily language, as well as structural. Queer people are accustomed to navigating constraints in the pursuit of information by and about ourselves; our tagging system aims to remove structural constraints and allow users to explore their options for defining our collection as it exists within a complex cultural and linguistic milieu. The potential of open tagging is discussed in Adler's analysis of transgender-subject taggers on Library Thing as a small world, which found that tagging as an information practice "inscribes and reflects norms of gender expression among members" (8). Dominant terminology and identity is established in open tagging norms, but members also contribute diverse terms to the language used by the community in less popular tagging conventions. Such practices have the potential to develop a nuanced community identity grounded in commonality and embracing variety. As our subject heading system focuses on authoritative umbrella terms to support consistent retrieval, volunteers have shown interest in the tagging system as a method of making specific identities visible as a part of our collection. This expansive space could for example include "dykes" as a tag on certain items, gathering together examples of a distinct queer culture that might otherwise be equated to the classification system's section of "Lesbians."

Design choices in this space can enact the values of a marginalized population who has experienced discrimination and distortion in historical and dominant knowledge organization. We note in our introduction that the notion of identity in queer spaces is both a foundation for organizing for rights, recognition, and respect and also itself an object of ongoing resistance. Queer communities challenge the fixity of labels, reclaim slurs as defiant banners, and in general challenge an assumption in knowledge organization that to be forward-looking is to find headings with stability and protection against obsolescence. Deciding that terminology once widely considered offensive, such as "queer" or "dyke," might be used as positive and defiant tactics in a knowledge organization system does not lend itself to a single policy but to an ongoing conversation among the library's community. For this community, changes over time are still changes among living generations, and we simultaneously argue that the usage of these terms are valuable political acts and that the continued or renewed circulation of these terms can be hurtful to community members for whom the history of the term has been violent and abusive.

Even this bounded space of a community-led queer library, there remain issues of historical bias, marginalization, and the silencing of gender minorities and Indigenous Peoples (Campbell et al., 2017). While the mission of the mission of the library and the intent of these two projects was to centre identities and experiences the dominant culture has marginalized, care must be taken not to reaffirm or create injustices with regards to axes of oppression beyond the view of the designers. A motivating problem with the original knowledge organization systems at OOTS was the privileging of a cis gay male perspective where those attributes of identity were left as the unmarked default. We also observed how Anglo- and white-centric the knowledge organization system had become in implementation; French and First Nations languages were assumed to be "Foreign" languages and all perspectives from people of colour were often shelved under "International LGBT" regardless of relevance to the local, Canadian context of those items. Redesigning the classification system around LGBT2QIA+ identities attempted to address the first issue by including each of these aspects of queer identity at the same level of the

hierarchy; our rethinking of language classification, spine labels, and cataloguing identities as subjects were intended to address the second issue.

These approaches created a new interplay between the knowledge organization system and the collection as absences are more apparent. That the 2-Spirit, Asexual, and Intersex sections take up remarkably little shelf space at the level of the identity hierarchy and that the spine labels for works by Indigenous authors are sparsely visible throughout the library space indicates that the issues of marginalization are not merely knowledge organization-deep. The current system, in making these proportions and absences visible, complements existing collection polices that attempt to improve representation in the library. The library, with its lack of financial resources and its reliance on donations, cannot fix these issues quickly but it can refuse to hide them.

6. Conclusion

To return to the comparison between LGBT2QIA+ communities and queer perspectives, we see the future of this work along two continuums. In the first, we consider how these projects improve upon the ability of knowledge organization systems to responsibly, accurately, and usefully locate LGBT2QIA+ subjects. We would like to see the systems summarized in this paper and instantiated in Out on the Shelves taken up by the knowledge organization community as examples of systems accountable to an LGBT2QIA+ community. In this regard, the two projects detailed above exist within a domain space of affiliated libraries, independent libraries, and archives populated by localized versions of DDC, LCC, and LCSH and archives' individualized approaches.

In the second continuum to which our work applies, beyond the relatively tangible contribution of these particular tools, we invite the knowledge organization community to take up the challenge of queering our systems. Though knowledge organization systems are at their foundations focused on controlling subjects and language, there is a generative tension between this goal and the notion that the referents—especially people—resist control. Centring queer subjectivity suggests new positions toward

phenomena such as obsolescence (Buckland, 2012), a shift focus from system creation to system revision and system discontinuation, and a shift in valuing technical affordances of malleability, transparency, and playfulness over reliability, ease-of-use, and unambiguity. The changes are not solely conceptual and technical but intersect with issues of labour and authority in information institutions. The queering of knowledge organization here asks not to resolve subjects made marginal or miscellaneous but to reexamine the system from the perspective of the margins and continues the work of Star and Bowker (2007) and Drabinski (2013) by taking a queer theory approach that asks "how those identities come discursively and socially into being and the kind of work they do in the world" (Drabinski p. 96).

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