

Indigenous subject headings at the Greater Victoria Public Library

Our project: replacing Library of Congress and Canadian subject headings related to Indigenous peoples with locally developed interim Indigenous subject headings using more current terminology.

Information about our library and patron demographics:

- 12 branches, serve 10 municipalities and 5 reserve lands with 380,000 residents.
- Approximately 4.7% of population identifies as Indigenous – lower than BC, but similar to Canada as a whole

Why we're doing it:

- Something we've been thinking about for a while, but the impetus was that in 2017 Truth and Reconciliation was a top priority for City of Victoria, and therefore a priority for GVPL – this was one of many initiatives started in 2017 and still going
- Our feeling – better to put something in place quickly, even if not perfect: these are interim, we will follow any national standards that are developed
- Recognized that not a priority for LC or LAC at the time; waited for the Truth and Reconciliation report from CFLA, but acknowledged that anything being done there would take a while
- Values call: remove the most culturally inappropriate headings from the catalogue, including those which can reinforce and perpetuate negative stereotypes
 - Because of this, also important to fully remove old headings, not just add new headings
 - We have very engaged patrons and were anticipating the possibility of hearing from someone about the old terminology
- But also functional call: people weren't searching by those terms, and weren't finding complete set of materials, staff were uncomfortable having to tell people what terminology to search under

Where we got information and developed headings:

- Indigenous Knowledge Organization initiatives currently in place
 - Xwi7xwa Library at UBC
 - MAIN-LSCH Working Group
 - University of Alberta
- Conversations happening elsewhere, particularly New Zealand

- First Nations websites and reference materials created by Canadian Indigenous authors

Consultation:

- Did not do consultation
 - Interim headings – didn't want to end up with national standards that went against the results of our consultation
 - Recognition that Indigenous communities were experiencing consultation fatigue
 - No defined user base – may be an easier process if academic or special library
- CEO spoke with executive director of Victoria Native Friendship Centre – they appreciated hearing what we were doing (as well as wondering why it took so long), but it was not a priority for them

What we did:

- What influenced our decision making
 - Replacement – did not create new terms as we don't do much original cataloguing, but reviewed and replaced as needed all relevant terms in LCSH and CSH
 - Our discovery layer doesn't search cross references, although we have since put a cross reference function into place to help staff
 - Wanted to look at all of the Americas, not just local
- Searched through all of LCSH and CSH for instances of "Indian", "Native" to create initial list, added terms from MAIN and Xwi7xwa Library or other terms found as work went on
- Replaced "Indian" or "Indians" with "Indigenous" or "Indigenous peoples"
 - In Canada, use as collective term for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis
 - Also use for peoples from North and South America
- Created headings for "First Nations" as a narrower term under "Indigenous", on an equivalent level with "Inuit" and "Métis", for works specifically relating to that group. Some of the "Indian" or "Indians" headings replaced with this
- Removed "...of North America", "...of Mexico", etc. from the main heading and replaced with geographical subdivisions. Use North America or Canada or province
- Followed established rules in LC for geographic subdivisions – can end up with either Indigenous peoples—Civil rights—Canada or Indigenous peoples—Canada—Claims
- In some cases, replaced subdivision with first level heading (Residential schools)
- Preferred Canadian terminology generally, for example "Band membership"
- Removed "Indian" from names of Indigenous groups, for example "Haida" not "Haida Indians"
- Used the preferred form of the names of Indigenous groups in Canada, as identified by the groups themselves or Indigenous reference sources, for example "Nuu-chah-nulth" instead of "Nootka"

How we do it:

- Add terms as 650 second indicator 4 (following previous established local headings)
- Do all authority work in house – have created ~700 authorities
- Locally edit LCSH or CSH authorities to reflect our practice, including additional non-preferred terms (Aboriginal and Native, alternate names); make sure previous terms do not have authorities; create original authorities as needed
- With new materials, either staff notice the headings and pass on to me, or I receive weekly report listing unauthorized headings, and can change from there.

The future of what we're doing

- Absolutely work in progress – will update terminology as needed, particularly locally

GVPL's interim Indigenous subject headings:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qWWY5549qnS69_LpHEL7_XeiuyrX3onr58I4u3jrj5c/edit?usp=sharing

This document should be open to view and download to anyone who has the link. This is our working document, so you'll see a tab of guidelines/instructions, a tab for the terms that were in our catalogue, and a tab for the terms that weren't in our catalogue. The last tab still has alternate headings, they just haven't been put into use here yet.

Contact information:

Rachel Rogers

Greater Victoria Public Library

rrogers@gvpl.ca