

Kristin Yiotis  
Site Study Assignment

Type: Pamphlet collection in an environmental library

Size: 10 4-drawer upright metal filing cabinets

Name: Pamphlets and Newspaper Articles Collection consisting of pamphlets, journal and magazine articles, newspaper clippings, brochures, maps. The focus of the collection is local to national: Palo Alto--Bay Area--California--Western USA.

Location: Acterra Environmental Library and Resource Center, Palo Alto, CA. The library is a nonprofit but is open to anyone involved in environmental research.

Job title: Currently all three people working on the collection are volunteers; two have strong cataloging experience. In the past a part-time librarian worked on it.

I looked at the Pamphlet Collection Subject Headings binders in two volumes. This list of subject headings consists of the controlled vocabulary that is applied to incoming items and that determines where the items are placed in the filing cabinets. Items are placed in folders labeled with a subject heading and filed in the cabinets. Volume 1 is the users' list of subject headings and contains approximately 2,000 entries. Volume 2, called Tracings List, is the catalogers' list and contains approximately 1,440 entries that represent the currently used subject headings. The additional 560 headings in Vol. 1 are entry vocabulary.

The controlled vocabulary is precoordinate:

- Environment--Countermovement
- Environment--General
- Environment--Global viewpoint
- Environment--Mediation
- Environment--National election 1980
- Environment--Research
- Environment and energy
- Environment action, Community action
- San Francisco Bay--Geology

This is a flat 2-level with no broader or narrower terms (BT), (NT), The inverted word order aggregates similar subjects in the files and on the list. Otherwise there is no hierarchy.

Nearly every entry in Volume 1 has at least one related term (RT):

- Emerald Lake
- Energy--Nuclear Safety Act
- Environment--California
  - See also*
  - Open space--California
  - Open space--Legislation
  - Regional planning

Entry vocabulary is included in Volume 1:

- California environment history
- See* Environment--California
- California Public Interest Groups
- See* Environment--California

I found some cataloging notes stuck in the binder that could be considered scope notes (SN) but none on the controlled vocabulary list itself.

Green Products:

- Cleaning--contains environmentally safe household alternatives, information on toxic chemicals, how to...

- Clothing--contains information recycled polyester, organic cotton, pesticides in

cotton, sweatshop free clothing...

Volume 2 is the master list that catalogers use to maintain the vocabulary. The volunteer librarian I spoke with, who created the Tracings List, is currently in the process (since 1998) of weeding the collection and the list of subject headings. In this process of weeding the collection, she discovered the need for a list that traced the *See* and *See also* relationships for each subject heading. The need was to remove all traces of the deleted subject heading including all the *See* and *See also* entries. The list shows all subject headings and their *See* and *See also* entries: X represents *See* entry vocabulary, XX represents *See also* related terms.

Environment--California

- X California environment history
- X California Public Interest Groups
- XX Open space--California
- XX Open space--Legislation
- XX Regional planning

Harbor

- X Breakwater
- XX Dredging
- X Marinas
- XX San Mateo County
- XX Santa Clara County
- XX U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The collection has been in existence for 30 years. The librarian I interviewed, who is not the librarian who is currently assigning subject headings to incoming material and creating new subject headings, believes that the existing list was generated organically. As the collection grew, librarians simply added new subject headings to the existing list. She doubts that the creators consulted outside resources or existing thesauri. The current creators of new subject headings don't.

The focus of the library has broadened from the original local focus on Palo Alto to a broader focus on California and the Western U.S. This change in focus has forced pulling some subject headings and adding others. New subject headings are currently created in the same way that the original list was created. Subject headings are added as the need arises. When incoming material arrives, a volunteer librarian assigns it a subject heading. If none of the current headings fit, the librarian creates a new heading and writes it into the list.

When new subject headings are added, all librarians make an effort to integrate the new heading to the existing headings by applying *See also* related terms. They feel that there should be some reason why this SH is added and it's integration into the existing headings determines whether or not to keep the incoming item.

These librarians that volunteer to work on the Pamphlet Collection at Acterra Library are retired from years of library work. They choose to work on it and have complete control over it. There is a part-time, paid librarian in the Acterra Library but she is not a trained librarian or library technician. She considers the Pamphlet Collection to be the domain of the volunteer librarians. It is a multi-person effort and probably a never ending one. The Subject Heading List on a Word document, but the updates are hand written. Eventually a new updated list should be printed out, but that doesn't seem to be a worry for the volunteers. The List is not browsable on the Web.

Mary Ellen Hasbrouk mehasbrouck@earchlink.net

Entry on Blackboard:

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This is a flat 2-level controlled vocabulary in a precoordinate design, with RT and entry vocabulary, but no BT, NT, and informal Scope Notes.

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