University of Idaho
Library

LIBRARY RESEARCH SESSION

Sociology 424

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Link to slides: https://is.gd/SOC424_sp23

What we're covering today

- Frameworks for organizing/classifying information
- Critiques of these frameworks
- Activity!

Frameworks for organizing/classifying information

- Organization/classification systems
  - Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) System
  - Library of Congress Classification (LCC) Outline

Frameworks for organizing/classifying information

- The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) System
  - Created in 1876 by Melvin Dewey (OCLC, 2011)
  - Used mostly by public, school, and small academic libraries

Frameworks for organizing/classifying information

- The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) System
  - The DDC "comprises ten classes, each divided into ten divisions, each having ten sections" ([Dewey Decimal Classification, 2023](#))
    - [List of Dewey Decimal Classes](#)
    - [LibraryThing Melvil Dewey System](#)

  - Sample call number
    - *Pay up: The future of women and work (and why it's different than you think)* by Reshma Saujani = 331.4097 S

Frameworks for organizing/classifying information

- Library of Congress Classification (LCC) Outline

  o Created "in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" ([Library of Congress, 2014](#))

  o Used mostly by large research and academic libraries

Frameworks for organizing/classifying information

- Library of Congress Classification (LCC) Outline
  - The "LCC divides all knowledge into twenty-one basic classes, each identified by a single letter of the alphabet…[which] are further divided into more specific subclasses identified by two-letter, or occasionally three-letter" ([Library of Congress, 2014](#))

  - Sample call number
    - *Public faces, secret lives: A queer history of the women's suffrage movement* by Wendy L. Rouse = JK1896 .R68 2022

Frameworks for organizing/classifying information

- Controlled vocabulary systems
  - [Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)](#)
  - [Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)](#)
  - Database-specific subject headings

- All of these are examples of attempts to consistently "apply topic descriptions to items in their collections" or made available in their resources ([Library of Congress Subject Headings, 2022](#))

Frameworks for organizing/classifying information

- Example subject headings
  - Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)
    - Women scientists
    - Transgender men -- Interviews
  - Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)
    - Homeless Youth
  - Database-specific subject headings
    - Rural poverty

Critiques of these frameworks

- DDC
  - Classification of materials related to homosexuality, religion, and women ([Dewey Decimal Classification, 2023](#))

- LCC
  - Classification of materials about marginalized groups ([Library of Congress Classification, 2023](#))

Critiques of these frameworks

- LCSH

  - Subject terms for materials about sexuality (Library of Congress Subject Headings, 2022)

- MeSH

  - Subject terms for materials about marginalized groups (Siemensma & McCulloch, 2022)

Activity

- Work in groups of 2
- Find a book related to this class in our Library catalog
  - What is the book's LCC class/subclass and call number?
  - What are the book's LCSH subject headings?

- Questions to consider:
  - Do you agree with the book's LCC classification? Would you classify it differently?
  - What do you think about the book's subject headings? If you were creating subject headings, what would they be?

How can we do better?

- Consider using subject term vocabularies created by communities
  - Examples include:
    - Homosaurus: https://homosaurus.org/
      - "Mitigating bias in metadata: A use case of Homosaurus Linked Data" by Juliet Hardesty and Allison Nolan (2021)

Activity

- Work in groups of 2
- Find a book that's focused on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer research or topics in our Library catalog
  - o What are the book's LCSH subject headings?
  - o What Homosaurus subject headings could you apply to this book?

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THANK YOU!

Please email me (jylisadoney@uidaho.edu) if you have questions or need help with library research in this class or others

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