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# Issue Paper

## Interrogating the User in LIS

### Issue Statement

The user in LIS is complicated by emerging technical platforms which are premised on “common sense” notions of race and capital and also predicated on logics of accumulation and surveillance, commodifying and reifying precise and scalable versions of the user. Critical information literacy and community archives, as sites of critical inquiry and identity making, are spaces that interrogate the relationship between users and these information platforms.

### Introduction

This paper is an investigation into the information user and the impact that information forms have on the identity of the user. The paper explores how library and information studies (LIS) conceives of the user in contradistinction to how prevailing technical platforms understand the user. These notions of the user are informed by human computer interaction (HCI) and by investigations of measurement and value. On the one hand, it has been theorized that knowledge organization should pair with the user’s identity (Furner, 2009) while on the other, there is mounting literature investigating how contemporary predominant knowledge organization is shaped by surveillance, algorithms, and data capture. These forces complicate how we think about identity, especially when considering how these technological forces are embedded within larger hegemonic cultural frameworks.

This paper is a descriptive overview of the user in LIS and begins with a survey of literature on the user as a subject-object relationship. This is followed by an inquiry into the emerging platforms such as search engines, social media, and online learning, exploring how hegemonic and “common sense” notions are deeply embedded in these technologies. I then suggest that within libraries and archives, the complicated understanding of the user is acknowledged via critical information literacy and community archives, respectively. Finally, the paper concludes with some future directions on how LIS can move forward given the dominance of these new platforms and the increasingly neoliberal frameworks of evaluation in higher education and information institutions.

Before beginning my MLIS degree, I worked for five years as an Instructional Technologist at UCLA Extension. An Instructional Technologist is a relatively new professional role in higher education whose core duties lie at the intersection of technology and pedagogy. Its function is driven by an increase in what is known as “EdTech,” or educational technologies. UCLA Extension is a branch of UCLA that offers courses to non-matriculated students. An affordance of this education model is the ability for remote students and course offerings. As a result, UCLA Extension offers a much higher ratio of fully online courses. Critical to the operation of these online courses is a technical infrastructure that is built upon EdTech platforms.

As an Instructional Technologist working with primarily online courses, I was able to explore many of the technologies that online learning was predicated on in detail. In particular, I became

interested in the interplay between platforms and users, especially on the implicit assumptions of platform design that revealed how the user was conceived. My interests in the user-platform relationship were not confined to technical limitations and concerns of accessibility, but also how instructional content was packaged. It became clear that in order for the learner to succeed in these online educational settings, they needed to meet the frameworks as defined by the institution and supported by the technical platforms. These interests and concerns fueled my application to the MLIS program and subsequent studies in informatics.

## Literature Review

The notion of the user is core to the LIS field. From libraries to archives to museums, there is an interest in pairing information structures with identity and community (Furner, 2009). In order to effectively align information structures with identity and community needs, there first needs to be an understanding of who the user is so that these institutions can organize themselves in a way that meets the needs of the information seeker. Complicating this understanding of the user is the technologies that these users engage with on a daily basis. Recent literature, both within and external to LIS, explores how information technologies are informed by and embedded within power structures, revealing how these technologies that information users engage with are 1) built on ideologies of racism, capitalism, and neoliberalism and 2) datafying the user, codifying them into an information object.

In “Death of the User: Reconceptualizing Subjects, Objects, and Their Relations,” Ronald E. Day posits the co-constructed nature of subjects and objects. For Day, “subjects and meaningful objects are co-determined by social, cultural, and physical affordances and co-emergent out of those relationships through expressive powers mediated by mutual affects.” By moving away from mechanistic understandings of the user, Day invites an understanding of the user as socioculturally structured, informed by “contextual social, cultural, and physical affordances” (78). Day’s analysis of the user reveals that user behavior is the result of subject-object relations and ‘mediated’ by social-cultural norms (85). This understanding of the user reveals how information, media, and platforms are critical to the construction of identity and spell the “end of a certain understanding of human beings and their activities as either determinative causes of, or effects from, ‘generating’ or ‘using’ information,” (2011) but instead as entangled with material forms.

In order to investigate the LIS user, then, an understanding of the forces that shape and inform technical platforms is necessary. One of these forces is race as outlined in Michael Omi and Howard Winant’s *Racial Formation in the United States*. Omi and Winant invoke Gramsci’s definition of hegemony through “common sense” (1994). Common sense is used to justify and reify dominant power structures of whiteness and capital, the effects of which are especially observed in the development of technical platforms. Safiya Noble, in *Algorithms of Oppression*, highlights how search algorithms are predicated on this common sense, with queries suggesting results which reinforce racism. Similarly, in *A Prehistory of the Cloud*, Tung-hui Hu traces the internet to its sovereign beginnings, noting how the infrastructure of the internet is built on

material forms which are informed by political power. These examples and others<sup>1</sup> serve to show how the platforms that users engage with everyday are mediated by power structures of common sense.

Complicating the subject-object relationship further is the logic of accumulation and resulting surveillance capitalism outlined by Shoshana Zuboff in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. As a new market form, the logic of accumulation utilizes “surveillance [which] is a foundational mechanism in the transformation of investment into profit,” compiling large data sets in order to perform predictive analysis resulting in behavior surplus, “our voices, personalities, and emotions” aggregated. This behavior surplus anticipates behavior which is then sold back to the user through marketing. Users navigating information platforms built on behavioral surplus and mediated by discriminatory algorithms both reinforces prevailing notions of hegemony as well as the subject-object relationship itself. Wendy Chun, invoking Phil Agre, notes that there is an “odd paradox at the heart of capture systems: they are both representation and ontology, data and essence” (2017). As Chun postulates in *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media*, “information is habit” (2017), laying the groundwork for understanding users as both the subject and object, information and habit.

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<sup>1</sup> Further examples include *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy* where Cathy O’Neil interrogates how the algorithmic use of big data reinforces discrimination and *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor* where Virginia Eubanks explores data driven discrimination.

Essential to the quantification of habit, which is codified as information, is the notion of measurement and scale. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing argues that precision is necessary in order to scale, but at the expense of heterogeneity (2012). In other words, in order to quantify behavior and produce value there needs to be clearly articulated, measurable concepts which can be codified and expanded upon. Andrea Mubi Brighenti suggests that the relationship between measure and value is circular, or entangled, and as such constitute a “measure-value environment” whereby objects are both quantified and understood (2018). Given that measures are environments, then value is inextricable, and only meaningful when contextualized within the environment. Measure therefore is both how we understand the environment and the environment itself, with maps, networks, topologies, and symbols representing and constituting the world. In the same article, Brighenti gives special attention to the unit “ $n = 1$ ,” noting that it “is not just a quantitative happening among others, but is a qualitatively distinct event,” a result of the entanglement of measure and value (2018). Articulating the user and their associated behaviors as precise, measurable units is at the core of scale, accumulation, extraction, and ultimately discrimination.

With these notions of measure, scale, habit, and sovereign infrastructures in mind, it is important to consider how public and community oriented information institutions recognize these forces both external and internal to the user. The following section suggests that recent movements in libraries and archives are contesting the idea of the user as scalable through critical and communal information practices.



## Discussion

This section of this paper discusses how these complicated notions of the user play out in libraries and archives. As platforms persistently reinforce the user as quantifiable and scalable, public information institutions are tasked with both making users critical of these platforms and of their relationship with information as well as providing users with a sense of belonging that is not bound up with dominant hegemonic platforms. Through a discussion of critical information literacy and community archives, an analysis of how libraries and archives strive to meet multiple criteria of success and identity is explored. These practices aim to liberate users through this critical evaluation and empower users by providing other ways of knowing and identifying external to the logic of capture.

### Critical Information Literacy

Within libraries, the user has been explored in detail, especially in literature on information literacy. This subfield has theorized the user in depth when considering how to effectively meet the needs of library users, especially in academically oriented libraries. Christine Pawley introduces the tension between what information literacy sets out to accomplish in the library and who users are in the article “Information Literacy: A Contradictory Coupling.” For Pawley, the inherent tension lies on the one hand with the intent to empower users through increased literacy while on the other conforming the user to established conventions through standardized curricula, described metaphorically as a “procrustean bed” (2003). Through an examination of information literacy, the tension of the user as traditionally conceived in LIS becomes apparent.

James Elmborg introduces Freirian notions of pedagogy to the conversation of information literacy in “Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instructional Practice.” In this article, Elborg draws from Paulo Freire, noting that pedagogy should be formed with and not for the oppressed. In other words, users and their needs should not be treated as a bank where information is deposited, but rather “active agents shaping their own lives” (2006). Central to the concerns of critical information literacy are frameworks for evaluating success and how information institutions are enforcing metrics of assessment onto users through mechanisms such as the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.

Critical information literacy acknowledges on the one hand that users have needs which are informed by the platforms they engage with, while at the same time encourages users to be critical of those same needs. This development is key in two ways: 1) it doesn’t assume that users come to the library as a “bank” waiting to be filled with information and 2) it encourages users to be wary of and think critically about platforms that do conceive of users in this way. Through this critical inquiry, an uncovering of the invisible and sovereign infrastructures is possible, inviting the user to reflect on technical platforms driven by the logic of accumulation and on their own entanglement with material forms mediated through these platforms.

### Community Archives

Within archival studies, the notion of information is secondary to that of evidence. Michelle Caswell notes that “this difference between evidence and information exposes a tension between the ways archives and libraries approach their materials, their users, and their organizational

systems” (2016 - <https://escholarship.org/content/qt0kr138f5/qt0kr138f5.pdf?t=obdp5j>). Due to the emphasis on context rather than the content, the relationship between archives and users is different from users’ relationship with the library. As institutions that are primarily evidential, researchers are often the primary user of the archive. Relatedly, archives in western scholarship are often formal components of governments and research institutions. These archival institutions therefore conceive of the archive as being about a user, as evidence. Given this, surveillance should be a primary concern for archivists (Caswell, 2016), as users could include state agents or other oppressive entities.

Community archives, on the other hand, aspire to pair its collection with a specific community in order to validate the identity of marginalized users outside the scope of mainstream archives. As “collections of material gathered primarily by members of a given community and over whose community members exercise some level of control” (Flinn et al, 2004), community archives offer an alternative to communities who do not feel represented by records in institutional archives. Primary to community archives is an active community that maintains and documents history “on their own terms” (2004). To be considered a community archive, the archive must represent a marginalized identity and aim to liberate those identities (Tai et al, 2019). Through the support and creation of community archives, archive professionals and community members acknowledge the plurality of identities that are separate from and counter to dominant recordkeeping practices. Critical to the development of these archives is the possibility for representation often considered extraneous to dominant evidentiary institutions, resulting in

epistemological, ontological, and affective levels of “representational belonging” (Caswell et al, 2016).

Much like the development of critical information literacy in the library, community archives complicate the notion of the user, and identity, in archives. Rather than accept as evidence those records that align with and thus reinforce hegemonic norms, community archives offer a space where users can “suddenly discover [themselves] existing” (Caswell et al, 2016). Furthermore, they offer counternarratives to users who, through engaging with technically mediated platforms that enforce the status quo, may not experience them otherwise. The records establish a community as legitimate to both the community as well as those extrinsic to that community through exposure to the records. Most importantly, community archives give a space to records, or evidence of a user, that would otherwise not have been captured. Again, surveillance is a concern as those who might use the community archive may not align with the community itself. But crucial is the possibility of capture that represents a marginalized community and increases heterogeneity, rather than capture that reinforces behavioral surplus and discrimination.

## Conclusion

In the advancements of critical information literacy and community archives, a trend can be observed that clearly acknowledges the tension of a user who is pluralistic and also constructed by their relation to dominant information forms. Likewise, both the library and archive exemplify a commitment to encouraging users to explicitly foster new information relationships via these critical methods while at the same time giving the user a voice in these platforms.

Furthermore, the newly forged subject-object relationships which result from these critical methods implicitly counter dominant information narratives by offering users a space and place to engage critically with information forms that are not tied to hegemonic technical platforms.

However, the subject-object relationship as theorized by Day suggests that forces such as algorithms of oppression, logics of accumulation, and big data all reinforce discrimination, racism, and neoliberal practices through platforms that are invisible and pervasive. If libraries and archives are to impact the habits of users while at the same time support the pluralistic needs of users, in part informed by these prevailing platforms, their task is not small. They must resist neoliberal trends of quantified assessment that have taken hold of higher education and are seeping into many public information institutions. Critical information literacy and community archives are a good start, but are tricky to deploy, especially when they themselves are subject to quantification and scale through pressure to demonstrate success and efficacy.

My experiences as a higher education administrator working with technical platforms have opened my eyes to these neoliberal pressures of algorithmic individuation and private-public partnerships in information institutions, pressures that ultimately filter down to the user. These pressures take many forms, from technical limitations to standardized instructional practices. Given the recent pandemic and now absolute dependence on these technical platforms, it is imperative as information professionals administering these programs that we are both conceptualizing the user as entangled with and also as measured and recapitulated by these

forces. Only when we have done so can we engage users with requisite empathy and with methods of critiquing these experiences and for discovering themselves existing.

The co-construction of identity with these technical forms shaped by power structures such as race and capital is what propelled my application to the PhD program in Information Studies.

The concepts outlined in this issue paper offer a starting point for interrogating how the information field engages with the user, both morally and practically. Moving forward, I hope to use these theoretical foundations for designing and engaging with methodologies that continue the trend of refocusing the conversation in the LIS field towards equity, inclusion, and social justice.

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## Professional Development Statement

When I began my MLIS degree at UCLA with a focus in informatics, my interests revolved around the relationship between information infrastructures and users. Through my studies I aspired to investigate the hegemonic nature of information systems design. These interests were informed by my experience working as an administrator in higher education for several years, primarily with the design and implementation of learning technologies for online distance learning. Among my driving concerns were the neoliberal and neocolonial trends I observed while supporting the university mission, carried out as a matter of policy and enforced through technology.

As I progressed through the program, my interests in power shifted from the design of information technologies to how these technologies are embedded in the mundane and everyday activities of individuals and communities. Systems such as information retrieval and media delivery platforms shape and are shaped by existing power structures such as race and capital. Through exploring this embeddedness I hope to properly understand and theorize the relationship between information, identity, and power. For these reasons I will be continuing my education by pursuing a PhD in Information Studies at UCLA after completing my MLIS where I will be studying what surveillance sees and how its data capture affects identity formation and social relations.

Throughout my MLIS degree I strove to integrate the knowledge and theory I gained in the classroom with all of my practices, whether they be work, extracurricular activities, or everyday behaviors. I worked several jobs and internships as an MLIS student. As a lab employee in the Information Studies Research Lab I assisted the lab director in rethinking the lab space as a place of applied informatics and media preservation techniques. In the Digital Humanities program I assisted with the taxonomization and visualization of the curriculum. At the Digital Library Program I worked closely with digitized ephemera and the creation of metadata for the online presentation of digital collections. Presently I work as a Research and Instructional Technology Consultant where I provide technical and pedagogical support to Humanities Faculty and research assistance to faculty in the Digital Humanities Accelerator program. This coming summer I will work with the National Park Service to migrate digitized archival records onto Calisphere.

I focused on applying my theoretical investigations to a professional context with an emphasis on the digital dimensions of information in all of my student jobs and internships. Working in both libraries and archives, I strived to explore as many information institutions as possible. In the same vein my work in the Information Studies Lab and the Scholarly Innovation Lab provided me with an opportunity to expand my research literacy and engage with faculty and students as they sought out technologies for research. My work with the Digital Humanities Program encouraged exploration of digital tools to explore data sets and texts and offered an opportunity to engage with humanities content. Finally, my work supporting technology and instruction

furthered my knowledge of digital learning tools, giving me a critical perspective into how information is created and delivered in an educational sense.

I assumed several responsibilities as a student, including co-chairing the Student Governing Board, where I contributed to updating the Department of Information Studies' Strategic Plan and served on a hiring committee for the MLIS Program Manager position. Outside of the department I acted as the liaison between Information Studies and the Social Sciences Council as well as the liaison between the Social Sciences Council and the larger Graduate Student Association, attending forums as a voting member. I also held the position of Vice President of the UCLA ASIS&T student group where I helped set up workshops as well as the Webmaster for the Artifacts student group, managing updates to the group site. Extending my practice beyond the university, I volunteered at the Conference of the Art Libraries Society of North America as well as the Archives Bazaar, both in 2019.

As a PhD student I will continue engaging multiple professional organizations and workspaces with an emphasis on academic community building. To this end intend to publish academic papers, attend and present at conferences, and perform research within the realm of information studies, digital humanities, and new media studies. In particular I am interested in involving myself with organizations such as the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) and the Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T), both of which are interdisciplinary societies focused on issues broadly dealing with science, technology, and society (STS). Relately I aspire to publish in journals related to these organizations such as

Science, Technology, & Human Values (ST&HV) and the Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology (JASIST).

While my PhD aspirations are the most immediate plans for my professional and educational future, I intend on continually growing and contributing to the field of Information Studies beyond my schooling. During my studies it became apparent that information in all of its forms and the structures that impact it are constantly changing. From the institutions that house information resources such as libraries, archives, and museums, to the values that impact how these institutions operate and are perceived, to the technologies that shape how we engage with information, scholarship and critical awareness are necessary in order to not only understand these shifts but also for critiquing how we understand these shifts through these means. As private sector technology firms, with opaque information practices and values driven by capital, continue to encroach on the public domain it is critically important to remain engaged as an information studies scholar.

After completing my PhD I aspire to remain in academia. While I am realistic about the contemporary state of higher education and faculty tenureship, I am also dedicated to research in the field and values that promote dismantling the pervading culture of Whiteness and commodification of self. By being in a position to continually learn and teach I hope to continue striving towards these goals. Whether this be as an academic, an academic librarian, or a decision making in one of these institutions, I intend to remain engaged in the information community throughout my professional life.

# Major Paper

## Literacy in the Library: Contingent Identities of Information

### Professionals

#### Abstract

This paper explores how information professionals are required to have multiple professional identities in order to carry out their duties in an information space. On the one hand, librarians are guided by frameworks put in place by the ALA and other professional organizations. On the other, Paulo Freire reminds us that pedagogy must be formed with, not for, the oppressed. As neoliberal pressures continue to mount in the library, external notions of success impact internal values. Simultaneously, communities are shaped by a logic of accumulation and algorithms of oppression which comprises notions of everydayness remediated through biased processes. If a librarian is committed to social justice and acknowledges the constructedness of information systems and of individuals through these information systems, they are committed to multiple evaluative criteria, both extrinsic and intrinsic. Rather than calling these notions of success paradoxical or contradictory, queer theory suggests that these identities are contingent.

#### Introduction

Libraries have now fully embraced the ethos of literacy, completing the shift to outreach and instruction, especially in the university. The Association of College and Research Libraries released a major overhaul of their Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education in

2016, a framework that has been highly contested since the initial version was released in 2000, solidifying the maturity of this movement (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2015). The move toward literacy has not come without some consternation among librarians, with critiques situated around “quality control” (Pawley, 2003) and “information transfer” (Elmborg, 2006). Holding true to the social values of information professionals, some librarians have resisted ideological domination (Pawley, 1998).

Pawley in the article *Information Literacy: A Contradictory Coupling* highlights the inherent tension in the phrase Information Literacy and the resulting bifurcation of possible outcomes. On the one hand, information literacy has the potential to empower citizens and democracy while on the other, it is a means to control the “quality” of information through literacy frameworks. Pawley likens this outcome to a “procrustean bed,” conforming the learner to the criteria of the teacher through adherence to standards and therefore shaping them in accordance with the status quo. Furthermore, the concept of information literacy reifies information as commodity rather than a process, resulting in a tension between information production and consumption (2003).

In the article *Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instructional Practice*, Elmborg builds off the tensions posed by Pawley and suggests critical theory as a lens for engaging with the problem of information transfer. By applying critical theory to the practice of information literacy, it is acknowledged that education is an inherently political activity and that “neutrality is not an option.” In this discussion, Elmborg cites Paolo Freire, calling out the ideology of capitalism that guides American education, treating students like “consumers and passive

receivers of knowledge rather than active agents shaping their own lives.” Freire suggests an alternative pedagogy that creates “critical consciousness” in students. Elmborg expands the concept of critical consciousness to the practice of literacy in the library, moving away from banking education towards democratic values (2006).

A Critical Librarianship movement among librarians followed the release of Critical Information Literacy with librarians supporting the movement under the #critlib hashtag on Twitter and on critlib.org. Critlib.org gives the following definition of critical librarianship (critlib.org, 2019):

Critlib is short for “critical librarianship,” a movement of library workers dedicated to bringing social justice principles into our work in libraries. We aim to engage in discussion about critical perspectives on library practice. Recognizing that we all work under regimes of white supremacy, capitalism, and a range of structural inequalities, how can our work as librarians intervene in and disrupt those systems?

Sarah Clark of betterlibraryleaders.com suggests that critical librarianship is first and foremost about empathy, incorporating students into the production of problem-solving and moving away from the notion of student as consumer (Clark, 2016):

Teachers and students alike can break free of the cycle of oppression by engaging in a “problem-posing dialogue” where neither side was presumed to have a monopoly on The Truth—if such a thing even existed. Instead, all parties are assumed to possess

knowledge that can help others think through and resolve problems, thereby becoming liberated from intellectual (and eventually, according to Freire, political) oppression.

Central to these ideas is the notion of democracy: How can information literacy be a democratic process, where teachers and students are both involved in the production and consumption of learning? Beilin explores this dialog further in the paper *Student Success and the Neoliberal University*. Troubled by the idea of success, Beilin questions how a “critical library praxis [can] encourage and support students’ academic and career goals but still remain faithful to the struggle against the system of inequality and oppression that enables success” given that notions of success are narrowing as neoliberal mandates are increasingly integrated into the university. For Beilin, the issue is that of evaluating success. On the one hand, there is the idea that success is closely aligned with students as “market actors” while on the other, the commitment to social justice asks librarians to push back against neoliberal criteria of success (2016).

The remainder of this paper explores these varying notions of success and how they play out in the library, especially through information literacy. A discussion on the forms of knowledge organization systems and their relation to identity will provide an analysis on how we can think about evaluating success in information literacy. An investigation into the information systems that comprise the social and informational realities extrinsic to the library will follow, exploring the impact of logics of accumulation and algorithms of oppression on the formation of identities. This investigation will help librarians understand how library communities, or students, have formed their criteria for success. Finally, the paper will conclude with a conversation about how



librarians can incorporate these success criteria while at the same time push back against the structures that form the identities of these communities. It is suggested that the duty of the librarian is to form multiple contingent identities in line with these contradictory notions of success, a strategy informed by queer theory.

## Literature Review

### Knowledge Organization and Identity

Given that information literacy and in particular critical information literacy is interested in the dialectic between teacher and learner, it is important to consider the knowledge organization systems that represent and/or shape an individual or community's identity. In "Interrogating 'Identity': A Philosophical Approach to an Enduring Issue in Knowledge Organization" Furner suggests that in evaluating knowledge organization (KO) schemes it is important to understand how they "successfully reflect the cultural identities of their users." Given that KO schemes are "representations or models of reality," the question becomes "how well do KO systems *represent* identity?" The analysis of KO systems here indicate the inextricable relationship between KO schemes and identity production. This being the case, how well do KO systems represent identity given that identities are multifaceted, mixed, multidimensional, and vague (2009)?

"The challenge of KO is how to make sure that such expressions of identities are represented in KO systems in ways that serve the users of those systems" Furner notes. The "goodness" of KO systems, then, is contingent on how well they represent the communities who interface with them. However, as KO systems are designed, the KO scheme may or may not align with those

communities they wish to serve. This tension is fully apparent given the consideration of information systems that dominate the information landscape today. With biased algorithms and logics of accumulation defining how communities engage with information, the identities of communities are conflated with these information systems. This conflation has consequences on what librarians must consider when performing critical information literacy.

To better understand the information landscape that shapes the communities libraries serve, a closer look at two of the prominent features of market driven information systems is explored. A discussion of surveillance capitalism is discussed in the following section, exploring the impact of a logic of accumulation presented by Zuboff in *Big Other: Surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization*. This is followed by a look at one feature of surveillance capitalism, *Algorithms of Oppression*, and how logics of accumulation are anything but neutral, driven instead by capital and market gains. This discussion is important when considering the implications of surveillance capitalism on the communities that use the library and how they are shaped by algorithms biased towards marketing shaped by the ruling class.

### Logics of Accumulation

In *Big Other: Surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization* Zuboff outlines a logic of accumulation that is the primary mode of contemporary capitalism. This logic of accumulation is driven by ‘big data’ in order to “predict and modify human behavior as a means to produce revenue and market control” in what Zuboff calls surveillance capitalism. Critical to this argument and to future democracy is a move away from a market that has persisted under capitalism which “depended upon the emergence of new market forms” and

where individuals made choices with their capital. Under surveillance capitalism, these new market forms are no longer driven by the choices of the individual, but rather drive the choices of the individual (2015).

Central to this is the understanding that the best predictions are observations. Surveillance capitalism, driven by a logic of accumulation, interventions, and ‘big data,’ provides a way to influence behavior and therefore increase the predictive power of the service and by extension the market. This new information civilization is what Zuboff calls Big Other where “new possibilities of subjugation are produced as this innovative institutional logic thrives on unexpected and illegible mechanisms of extraction and control that exile persons from their own behavior” (2015). As a result of Big Other, a privileged few, such as Google, Facebook, and Amazon, have access to this logic of accumulation and therefore, the ability to make decisions that fundamentally shape the market. This represents an asymmetry between those who have access to the knowledge afforded by ‘big data’ and those whose social and informational needs are met and influenced by these platforms.

Evidence for surveillance capitalism is seen in all corners of information infrastructure. From Youtube video suggestions (Schwartz, 2019) (Lewis, 2018) to journalism and the distribution of news (Staltz, 2017) (Helmore, 2019), the platforms which the information civilization uses for their information and social needs have shifted to the control of a few companies. Content not paid for by producers, or unable to be monetized in the current marketplace, is buried under all the content that is. The effect of this process is the reification of hegemonic norms in the

information sphere, whether through the information individuals receive when they search Google or the ads users see when they browse Facebook. Furthermore, as these platforms are increasingly “personalized,” the information they provide users is in fact more of the same; they are the data of everydayness captured and recapitulated through the lens of marketing.

### Algorithms of Oppression

An example of this asymmetry of power between information production and consumption is discussed in Noble’s *Algorithms of Oppression*. While searching “black girls” on Google, Noble interrogates the bias inherent in the results, noting that “the core of my argument is the way in which Google biases search to its own economic interests - for its profitability and to bolster its market dominance at any expense.” Given “Google’s monopoly status, coupled with its algorithmic practices of biasing information toward the interests of the neoliberal capital and social elites of the United States” the resulting outcome is the “a provision of information that purports to be credible but is actually a reflection of advertising interests” (2018). Here the effects of surveillance capitalism are seen in action, resulting from the algorithmic biasing of information in order to promote capital.

Noble connects the product of surveillance capitalism with the oppression that necessarily occurs as a result of following this logic of accumulation. In order to be marketable, information needs to follow capital. If it is profitable that searching for “black girls” on Google results in porn because those are paid results, then those are the results that will be shown. And because capital largely falls in the hands of an already privileged class due to the reification of racism through racial formation (Omi and Winant, 1994) and maintaining the White substrate (Lipsitz, 1995),

then Google search results will predominantly reinforce the values of the privileged class while further marginalizing already marginalized populations (Noble, 2018). A logic of accumulation is agnostic to these social effects as it is only driven by market forces. Thus far, any changes that these platforms have made to their behavior in relation to concerns about social justice have all been in reaction to negative publicity (for example, the changes Google made to their results for the search “black girls” (Noble, 2018)), and are not indicative of a wider social justice effort.

### Fake News: Misinformation and Disinformation

Observations of a logic of accumulation and algorithms of oppression have an impact on what constitutes misinformation and disinformation. For the purposes of this paper, this discussion is only briefly mentioned as an ingredient that shapes the communities and individuals that libraries serve. As Google search results, Facebook feeds, and Amazon suggestions are increasingly personalized, user engagement is an information set not entirely defined by the laws of scientific or journalistic rigor, but rather by marketing and the Big Other motivation to shape the user into an ideal capital automaton, exiled from their own behavior. This being the case, individuals are targeted by information with market logic and less concerned about the truth value of the information. The information set available to an individual is then very possibly constituted of mis- and disinformation as traditionally defined however to the user this information constitutes their information reality.

Those in a privileged enough position to question the underlying principles that shape the information they consume or the platforms that deliver it are not the focus of this paper; it is those who come to the library, with notions of success shaped by these platforms, that are the

concern of librarians and critical information literacy. Now that the stage is set for understanding how communities are coming to the library, a discussion about how the library, given the emphasis on information literacy and social justice, can reconcile the forces that shape an individual while at the same time remain empathetic to the identities of the individuals and communities.

## Discussion

I have argued that 1) information literacy is inherently a tension between information as commodity and literacy as transfer, or informing through teaching; 2) that critical information literacy is interested in the coproduction of learning between teacher and student in order to bring into alignment the students idea of success; 3) that students, communities, and even librarians are shaped by a logic of accumulation and resulting algorithms of oppression; and 4) that knowledge organization systems, and by extension information systems, are in their design reflections of their designers (and ideally their users). In light of these conditions, how should a librarian to successfully navigate the information literacy space? Success again is contingent on who is defining it, be it the student, teacher, a set of standards imposed by the ACRL, or some combination thereof.

The remainder of this article will focus primarily on Beilin's article as it presents an interesting dilemma when considering critical information literacy. Beilin argues that "higher education today is premised on a certain kind of contract, between student and institution and between student and instructor" and that the student has "has willingly entered into this contract and seeks

to acquire the best possible grades and diploma,” noting that this is what “success means in the academy.” Libraries “strive to make [themselves] indispensable for student success, and librarians are forced to help work toward this common goal” (2016). This is why, Beilin argues, the ACRL has inserted its framework, in order to insert itself as part of this success project. Thus, as students demand training for technical skills, libraries are obligated by the contract between student and university to perform technical training, as “it is important to respect students’ aspirations for success according to the contract” (2016).

Beilin suggests that “our challenge should be to teach success on *two* levels... encourage alternative definitions of success while at the same time ensure success in the existing system.” Beilin rightly notes that those who “err on the side of excessive cynicism or pessimism toward the status quo” and therefore discourage students’ concept of success do so from a privileged position familiar with neoliberal pressures and able to navigate them while also critiquing them (2016). This is the crux of the issue, a crux made more complex when considering that the students Beilin refers to have been exiled from their own behavior, shaped in no small part by a logic of accumulation. The ask is that librarians on the one hand teach notions of success that reify the information structures informing their values and personal notions of success, *even when those success criteria may be oppressive to the student or the student’s community*. Teaching students practical skills is at once valuable to students as they navigate neoliberal and capitalist landscapes, while also potentially robbing them of the critical tools necessary to reflect on those frameworks and their impacts on marginalized communities and the environment.

“When we question what student success is, we necessarily have to ask what librarian success is. ... If we wish to question the purely utilitarian or instrumentalist version of student success, we have to align our own success accordingly” Beilin remarks. Of course, Beilin and critical information literacy is not arguing that we should not attempt to instill students with these critical tools (a criteria of success for most critical librarians), but it does erode away at the possibility of promoting crucial values in a time of surveillance capitalism. Beilin suggests that the academic hustle to produce papers, present at conferences, and dress up CVs is in practice exhibiting those same ideas of success that information professionals hesitate to promote in the library. Therefore, we can’t deny students “the skills and abilities that their contracts have promised them [just] as we cannot completely ignore the rules that govern ... professional survival” (2016).

It is difficult to argue with this reasoning as it is central to what critical information literacy is asking. In one sense, this is the logical conclusion of critical information literacy: librarians take on the success criteria that students bring with them to the library. Librarians cannot be too critical of these success criteria because to do so would exhibit the privileged social and class status prominent in the information profession and would compromise not just the student’s relationship with the library but also their (neoliberal) contract with the academic institution. Therefore, in order to be a librarian bound by these frameworks, aligning these success criteria is a necessary condition for performing the librarian role. Yes, there might be some students who express interest in critiquing these systems and in this case, the librarian can then explore the critical toolbox. But again, this desire must emanate from the student.



Does considering the implications of surveillance capitalism affect the priorities of critical information literacy? Troublingly, students and community members are increasingly exposed to technological nudges to behave in a manner benefitting marketers and advertisers. How are librarians to push back against these information consumption behaviors so deeply embedded in the information and social substrate? Clark, while observing and listening to students go through the information seeking process, notes that students “value both a good grade and creative expression to varying degrees, none seems to follow either a simple neoliberal desire for economic success, nor an idealistic Freirean vision of cultural transformation” (Clark, 2016). This suggests that there is some hope that students are not completely acclimating themselves with neoliberal models of success as they navigate their academic journeys. However it also does not suggest just what students are getting at in their academic endeavors in the first place, and why. These motivations are important when considering the values of the student, academia, and the library.

Finally, Beilin offers a glimmer of hope, suggesting that information professionals can “[present themselves] (through... professional organizations and institutional groupings) as dedicated to the public good of the library and to the liberation of all people, especially those most likely to be disenfranchised and oppressed by the forces of neoliberalism” (2016). This comment leaves information professionals and librarians in a complicated position. It asks librarians to lead split professional lives: on the one hand, be the critical librarian motivated by values of liberation, democracy, and attunement to marginalized communities while, on the other, adopt success

criteria driven by neoliberal, commercial, and surveillance capitalistic values. Sometimes these alternative value sets overlap, or at least can be framed in a non-contradictory way. In some instances, however, these values may be contradictory, as when a student is indoctrinated by fake news. The contradictory identities asked of the librarian, as well as the resulting burnout and job creep noted in the profession (Ettarh, 2018), still remain an issue.

In the paper *Queering the Catalog: Queer Theory and the Politics of Correction*, Drabinski suggests queer theory as a framework for navigating the power structures of classification systems in the library. In discussing the Library of Congress Subject Headings, Drabinski notes that “the problem is not that cataloging happens, but that it happens incorrectly” and that the resulting knowledge of self and world “is understood to be discursively produced, socially powerful, and always already undergoing revision.” Rather than focus on fixing perceived problems only to have those fixes become anew set of problems to be fixed, queer theory can “refocus attention away from the project of producing ‘correct’ knowledge organization systems, pointing toward a project of dialogic pedagogical interventions” (2013). This strategy, while oppositional in nature, is one method librarians can employ when performing the role of librarian. Drabinski, citing Butler, notes that “discursive construction of categories means that categories produce each other” and therefore “categories are not mutually exclusive, but mutually contingent” (2013).

Adopting this articulation of queer theory to the professional identity of librarians, the identities that might be considered contradictory become contingent, as does the role of the librarian.

Librarians, asked to perform the role of teacher when performing information literacy, take on certain values and success criteria while at the same time, must perform the role of the critical librarian, and take on values of critical information practice in their execution of literacy. In this way, librarians can lead by example; their performance both in the library and in their profession are always pushing up against hegemonic categories and practices, even when they are engaged in them. Performing this role is an act of discursive construction, defining their professional self both in acknowledgement of these hegemonic forces and against them. In this way, librarians still retain their relevance in the information space while at the same time define it.

## Conclusion

This paper explores the role of the critical librarian in an age of surveillance capitalism and algorithms of oppression. As academic librarians are now expected to engage in information literacy as part of their role due to external pressures to make the library relevant in contemporary academia, conversations about how to engage with students in a way that both adheres to the success of the student while at the same time encouraging critical thought on information are widespread (Pawley, 2003) (Elmborg, 2006) (Beilin, 2016). Critical information literacy recommends a Freireian approach to teaching, incorporating the students into the production of learning along with the librarian. It is suggested that in order to engage with students most completely is to take on their success criteria when performing information literacy. Criticizing their criteria for success is to endanger their success as students within academia and their relationship with the library. This conversation is made more complex when considering that students and their success criteria are dramatically shaped by logics of

accumulation and algorithms biased toward the ruling class, as these information systems are impactful on the identities of the individuals and users who engage with them. This paper suggests that in order to perform the role of the librarian given these constraints, queer theory is a useful framework. Queer theory suggests that the identities of a librarian are contingent, not contradictory, and by living the dialectic a librarian can lead by example. This framework is especially useful as communities and society are incorporated into Big Other as a way of pushing back against the persistent and invisible shaping of behavior by surveillance capitalism.

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# Elective Work

## Analog Game Metadata Schema

### Abstract

Tabletop games have increased in popularity over the last 20 years among hobbyists, collectors, librarians, and scholars. This metadata schema is intended to support cataloging efforts of tabletop games as cultural artifacts for use in libraries and research. While the website BoardGameGeek has served as the defacto metadata source for board gamers, the metadata and vocabulary they collect and make queryable falls short for purposes such as classification, circulation, and tracking trends in design and distribution. Issues include inconsistent and vague use of categories, mechanics, an absence of role playing games which are described on a separate site, RPGGeek, and an absence of most card games. This paper builds on the work done by BoardGameGeek as well as the Video Game Metadata Schema developed by University of Washington Information School Game Research Group.

### Introduction

Tabletop games, especially board and role playing games, have increased in popularity over the last 20 years (Duffy, O. (2014). In gaming literature, board games and RPGs have not enjoyed as much interest and research as video games and sports. However, interesting research is being done around the sociality and aesthetics of board games and RPGs. These advancements in



tabletop games preclude a necessary mode in which to engage with them as an information object and cultural artifact. In order to classify and discuss tabletop games in the context of libraries and archives, a metadata schema is proposed which builds off the current leading community around board games, BoardGameGeek (BoardGameGeek, 2019), and parallel work done at the University of Washington and their Video Game Metadata Schema (Video Game Metadata Schema, 2017).

The definition of games used for the purpose of this project is taken from the philosopher Bernard Suits: “the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles” (Suits, 1978, p. 53). According to this definition, they must be engaged in voluntarily and they must contain obstacles, which are imposed by the rules. A key argument for playing a game according to Suits is achieving the lusory attitude, or “To play a game is to attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs [prelusory goal], using only means permitted by rules [lusory means], where the rules prohibit use of more efficient in favour of less efficient means [constitutive rules], and where the rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity [lusory attitude]” (Suits, 1978, pp. 54-55). This has been dubbed “striving play” (Nguyen, forthcoming), where a player takes on the end state of the game and makes it their own end state while they are engaged in this play. Due to recent interests into the aesthetic and practical properties of games and the heightened interests in board games, a method for discussing these complex artifacts as information artifacts is in order.

Tabletop games are largely defined by their physicality (Analog Game Studies, 2014). Typically, players are required to be within physical proximity of each other. Core components of the game that players interact with are also constituted in a physical medium, such as boards, cards, and figurines which largely distinguishes tabletop games from other games, such as sports. Due to the increasing literature around these types of games which refer to them as analog (Analog Game Studies, 2019), this schema follows adopts this terminology and will refer to these games as analog games, with the schema titled Analog games Metadata Schema (AGMS). While there is considerable debate regarding what to call this genre of games, this paper will use the terms analog and tabletop interchangeably, both of which capture the genre of games discussed appropriately.

## Audience

The schema proposed here is intended for librarians, archivists, researchers, and hobbyists for cataloging, recordkeeping, and sharing collections of tabletop games among individuals and institutions. The schema is intended to build off pre existing metadata already captured by BoardgameGeek in order to make possible the extraction of the immense metadata that the community has already contributed to the site while establishing a vocabulary for standardizing descriptions of tabletop, RPG, and card games among the community. The schema aspires to be mappable onto MARC records (Library of Congress, 2019) as well as to the Dublin Core Metadata Schema (DCMI: Dublin Core Metadata Element Set, Version 1.1: Reference Description, 2019) to promote ingestion into other repositories. Finally, certain schemata items aspire to be interchangeable with the VGMS. In order to ensure compatibility with existing

metadata schemas and crosswalk tools, the schema will be maintained as XML (XML Introduction, 2019).

Existing search and retrieval systems around tabletop games are distributed among various online communities. BoardgameGeek is the leader in aggregating and making searchable board games. Their sister site, RPGGeek (RPGGeek, 2019), plays the same role in the Role Playing Games (RPG, 2019) community. Pagat (Pagat, 2019) is the leader in games which use the 52 card deck (“French Suited”) popular in the United States and increasingly the world due to popularity of Poker. There is some overlap in each of these communities, and among these communities and the video games communities (e.g. apps that play the same games or apps necessary to play some hybrid analog/digital games). Each of these sites includes their own search criteria and organization of these objects. There is no controlled vocabulary across these sites which makes using them in the information institutions like the library difficult.

## Metadata Creation

This schema aspires to become the authority voice in each of these named communities and hopes that these communities can participate in this project in return. As a way to encourage participation and to acknowledge these communities as authority sources themselves, crowdsourcing is proposed as a method for generating these partnerships and creating metadata, as recent efforts indicate that engaged communities do actively participate (Deines, Gill, Lincoln, & Clifford, 2018). To this end, data already generated from these sources will be used to populate this initial metadata schema. However, care will be taken to tidy up the conflation of

mechanics, themes, and subdomains that already exists in these sources. Input will also be derived from the existing VGMS and from various game communities.

The crowdsourcing discussed here is done by proxy; numerous board game enthusiasts and players have contributed enormous amounts of information to sites like BoardGameGeek. This metadata is already useful and powerful. RPGGeek is operated by a contingent community and follows many of the same metadata practices, allowing for integration of these two authority sources. More difficult to assess is the metadata on Pagat as it is operated by a different community with different metadata practices. While the card games are generally broken into class and type, these elements are not searchable through the site interface. Some work would need to be done in order to more closely align the explicit and implicit information available on that site with more readily available metadata on BoardGameGeek and RPGGeek. It is suggested that once a widely agreed upon schema and vocabulary are developed, crowdsourcing within the game community could assist with this metadata integration.

## Metadata Categories

### Physical Elements

Tabletop games, being defined by the objects that comprise them, are necessarily **physical**. They play out in a physical space, have physical components, and require physical interaction among players. There is discussion that computers and the digital are also physical, bits and bytes sitting on magnetic disks or like media. This paper does not enter this debate, but makes the digital/analog distinction for pragmatic purposes, mainly along the dimension of how players

engage with the game medium. Due to the physicality of tabletop games, certain metadata elements will be necessary for describing these components. This aspect differentiates analog game metadata schemas from certain video game schemata. Physical schemata include number of players, game pieces and components, box dimensions, and play space requirements.

## Theme

An aspect that most games, analog and digital, share are **themes**. Themes are often but not necessarily rooted in history or a fantasy or science fiction narrative. Themes may or may not be intertwined with the mechanics of a game. For example, *Twilight Struggle* is heavily themed after the Cold War with opposing players taking the side of the US or the USSR. The theme of *Twilight Struggle* is intimately connected with the mechanics of the game. *Lost Cities*, a game themed around exploration and discovery of lost monuments, is a game where the theme and the mechanics do not appear codependent but instead largely independent. Games like chess and bridge are considered abstract games as there is largely no narrative surrounding the narrative of the game. Common themes in tabletop games include abstract, war, and economic.

## Mechanics

**Mechanics** are another schemata point that is shared between analog and digital games.

Mechanics are in short how a game is played. They are the affordances a player has in the gamespace for overcoming the obstacles presented by the game rules. Mechanics are therefore important to most game types: in chess bishops can only be moved diagonally; in basketball the ball needs to be dribbled; in *Simcity* zones can only be developed so far from roads; and so on.

While mechanics are shared across game types, certain types of mechanics are prevalent to

certain game mediums. For example, probabilistic outcomes are more readily calculated in video games, though they do occur in boards games and RPGs as well (such as the 20 sided die in Dungeons and Dragons). Common mechanics include deck building and tile placement.

### Aboutness

The **aboutness** of a game is also shared between all game types. This description of games is difficult to assess in a systematic way due to the subjective experience of players. It is interested in the question of what it is like to play a particular game, or to make a move within the game rules. Recent scholarly work is currently taking shape to answer these questions (Nguyen, forthcoming), and this research has implications on how games could be described via a metadata schema. This metadata schema does not intend to be an authoritative voice in the present state of the discussion concerning the aboutness of games, though it leaves room for advances in this area.

### Provenance

Finally there is the game **provenance** metadata. This category includes rights and intellectual property information such as designer, artist, and publisher information as well as other administrative data such as release date, release version, and rating (e.g crowdsourced ratings from BoardGameGeek). Provenance data provides information about what publishers release games when, giving an overview of the tabletop game market. This metadata section can also be thought of as corollary to technical or administrative metadata.

## Type and Genre

**Genre** is a general category that aims to capture what kind of tabletop game is being discussed.

There are three types primarily discussed here, organized by their primary medium: board games, card games, and role playing games. **Type** can be thought of as sub-genre. This schema point vocabulary is contingent on the genre label and specifies more granularly what kind of game is being discussed in a play context. In other words, what is the style of the game. In board games, common styles include family, strategy, abstract, and so on. In card games styles include patience; in role playing games, dice rolling, storytelling.

## The Schema

This is the initial version of the schema, adopted largely from BBG and the VGMS. Metadata elements that align with DCMS are denoted with [DC:] and with VGMS, [VGMS:]. Asterisk (\*) indicates whether the element is required for the schema. Due to the limited scope of Dublin Core, multiple elements may be mapped to individual Dublin Core elements. For example, Play Space and Play Time both map to the Dublin Core element coverage.

**Mechanic\*** - The primary operation the player uses to overcome the obstacle(s) in the game.

Multiple values can be recorded.

**Type\*** (sub-genre) [DC: type] - An attribute of Genre. This is the style of the gaming experience, given the genre designation.

**Genre\*** [DC: type] [VGMS: Gameplay Genre] - The general category of tabletop game. There are three accepted values: board game, card game, role playing game. These are not mutually exclusive categories and multiple values can be accepted.

**Theme\*** [DC: subject] [VGMS: Narrative Genre] - The theme of a game. This is the general story the game employs to allow a narrative of mechanics to play out.

**Title\*** [DC: title] [VGMS: Game Title]- The name of the game.

**Designer\*** [DC: creator] - The creator(s) of the game.

**Publisher** [DC: publisher] - The entity responsible for the production and distribution of the game.

**Date\*** [DC: date] [VGMS: Retail Release Date] - The date the game was released or date the game was invented.

**Edition** [DC: source] [VGMS: Version Information] - The print or version of a game.

**Rating** - Crowdsourced from BBG. Scale 1-10. This is a dynamic value, so the rating in the schema may differ from the current BBG rating. Refer to the date of metadata creation.

**Game Rate** (Difficulty/Complexity) - Crowdsourced from BBG. Scale 1-5. This is a dynamic value, so the rating in the schema may differ from the current BBG rating. Refer to the date of metadata creation.

**Language\*** [DC: language] [VGMS: Language] - The language the game components or instructions are written in.

**Intellectual Property\*** [DC: rights] - Specify whether the game is the intellectual property of the creator, publisher, or combination thereof.



**Community Site\*** [DC: identifier] - The equivalent of an “authority” site for board, RPG, or card games.

**Expansion** [DC: relation] - Specify whether the game is an expansion on, and therefore contingent to, another game.

**Packaging Dimensions** [DC: format] [VGMS: Packaging] - The size and weight of the game box or container.

**Number of Players** [VGMS: Number of Players]. The number of players the game requires.

**Play Space** [DC: coverage] - How much space an instance of playing a game will take, on average.

**Play Time** [DC: coverage] - How much time an instance of playing a game will take, on average.

**Components\*** [DC: format] - The pieces necessary to play the game such as board, cards, dice, chips, etc. This element accepts multiple values.

**Description\*** [DC: description] [VGMS: Summary] - A description or account of a resource

**Notes** [VGMS: Game Note] - Any other feature or characteristic of a game that is notable not covered in the other fields

**Artist** [DC: contributor] - The artist of the game components.

**Award** - Nominated and/or awards received.

## Controlled Vocabulary

Controlled vocabularies are important for ensuring that metadata contributors use the same language when crediting or editing metadata. The vocabulary in this schema is sourced from

various communities as well as metadata schemas such as the VGMS and aspires to be incorporated back into those communities to increase harmony among descriptions of tabletop games. A controlled vocabulary also increases cohesive retrieval when searching and filtering. While the initial draft of this schema does not pretend to cover every possible mechanic or thematic descriptor in use, it does define a few in the hopes of setting a standard for future versions of controlled vocabulary. It is both important and difficult to define these controlled vocabulary: important due to the significant lack of previous scholarship in this domain; difficult due to the expansive vocabulary for describing games in the field as well as difficulties in defining terms of art (Donovan, Cho, Magnifico, & Lee, 2013).

#### Mechanic

**Deck Building** - Players have a personal collection of cards or tokens that provide different actions and/or resources which are randomly drawn.

**Tile Placement** - Players place pieces or tiles to shape the game board.

**Trick-taking** - Commonly used in card games. Each player plays a card from their hand face up and all cards played constitute a trick, which is won by a player or team according to the rules of the game.

**Hand Management** - Commonly used in card games. Cards played in a certain order or sequence will benefit the player.

## Genre

**Board Game** - A game that requires space for the components to be situated. Components are requisite for this genre, contrasting it from most RPG that do not require specific components (though they may to increase narrative).

**Card Game** - A game that requires the use of the 52 card “French” deck of cards.

**Role Playing Game** - A game that is typically played without components, but typically include dice as a decision tool. A persistent performative aspect is typical.

## Type (Genre prerequisite)

**Strategy** (board, card) - A game in which decision making skills have a high significance in determining the outcome; chance is often minimized.

**Party** (board) - A game that encourages social interaction, typically by alluding to popular references and requiring lower amounts of skill as chance often plays a significant role. Can accommodate large groups.

**Storytelling** (board, role-playing) - A game where the player crafts a story based on prompts or materials provided by the game.

## Theme

**Abstract** - Typically without a theme, e.g. chess, go, most card games.

**Economic** - Players to develop and manage a system of production, distribution, trade, and/or consumption of goods, simulating a market in some way.

**War** - Modeled after conflict, simulating military actions.

## Components

**Die** - Object with multiple sides (typically 4-20), often with different values on different sides.

Typically rolled for introducing probability as a mechanic.

**Chip** - Counters of uniform weight and size but with different colors to represent different values.

**Meeple** - Small token used in board games, from Carcassonne. Used to represent player occupation in the board game space.

**Token** - Pieces used to designate areas or figures on a board.

## Use Case and Sample Record

As this schema is intended to be used by information professionals, such as catalogers, and researchers, it is important to make these objects searchable by multiple dimensions. For example, if games were to be included in a library's catalog, a library patron looking for a short game to play with a friend might want to search for games that are two players and take less than 30 minutes to play. Similarly a researcher who is interested in military themed games that are modeled after the cold war released in the 2000s might query a games database for war and/or cold war themed games with a date range between 2000 and 2009. This schema accounts for both of these use cases.

For the following use case, the user was browsing the library for a quick board game for two players. The user could find this game on BoardGameGeek or find it via a library interface that searched Dublin Core:

## Sample Record

**Mechanic\*** - Hand Management

**Type\*** (sub-genre) - Strategy

**Genre\*** - Board Game

**Theme\*** - Abstract

**Title\*** - Battle Line

**Designer\*** - Reiner Knizia

**Publisher** - GMT Games

**Date\*** - 2000

**Edition** - 1

**Rating** - 7.4

**Game Rate** (Difficulty/Complexity) - 1.91

**Language\*** - English

**Intellectual Property\*** - GMT Games

**Community Site\*** - <https://www.boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/760/battle-line>

**Expansion** - no

**Packaging Dimensions** -

**Number of Players\*** - 2

**Play Space** -

**Play Time** - 30 minutes

**Components** - 70 cards; 9 tokens

**Description** - Two opponents face off across a 'battle line' and attempt to win the battle by taking 5 of 9 flags or 3 adjacent flags. Flags are decided by placing cards into 3 card poker-type hands on either side of the flag (similar to straight flush, 3 of a kind, straight, flush, etc). The side with the highest 'formation' of cards wins the flag.

**Notes** -

**Artist** - Roland MacDonald, Rodger B. MacGowan, Mark Simonitch

**Award** -

## Future Directions

While sites like BoardGameGeek will likely remain the authority source for board games and is likely to field the largest number of queries, even from library users or researchers, this schema is an attempt at refining the search parameters and terms by introducing a schema and controlled vocabulary. The schema will also over time make searching for games in a library catalog possible by mapping onto the Dublin Core Metadata Schema and by extension MARC. Finally, this schema aspires to cover all tabletop games in order to unify the fractured authority sources between board games, card games, and role playing games. By pairing the AGMS with the VGMS, a more cohesive study and exploration of games as cultural artifacts can be explored. There is also an opportunity here for the creation of a Meta Game Metadata Schema in order to capture the unifying features of games.

This report is a preliminary survey of the existing analog game space. It suggests a definition of analog, or tabletop, games; notes which sources are the community authority figures within each

defined analog game domain; provides a rudimentary metadata schema combined from Dublin Core, the Video Game Metadata Schema, and existing BoardGameGeek search parameters; and provides some sample controlled vocabulary definitions. Further work needs to be done with this schema including increasing the harmony between board game, card game, and role playing game terms, organization, and search techniques; engaging with analog gaming communities for their feedback and testing of the schema; and contacting the named authorities to see if larger discussions could be initiated around these efforts. Certain local communities could be leveraged for their input and participation including the UCLA Games Lab and the Information Studies Research Lab, as well as game stores local to Los Angeles.

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## Appendix

<b>Title</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Designer</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="x"/>
<b>Publisher/Manufacturer</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="x"/>
<b>Year Published Range</b>	<input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/>
<b>Minimum Age</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Average User Rating Range</b> Values 1 to 10	<input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/> with at least <input type="text"/> user ratings
<b>Average Gameplay Weight Range</b> Values 1 (Light) to 5 (Heavy)	<input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/> with at least <input type="text"/> user weight ratings
<b>Filter by Collection</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Owned <input type="radio"/> Rated Specify User: <input type="text" value="ademordna31"/>
<b>Filter Expansions</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Click to NOT search expansions
<b># of Players Range</b>	<input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Normal (include all games for this range) <input type="radio"/> Exact (include games that only support exactly this range)
<b>Min Playing Time</b>	<input type="text"/> (games will take at least this long)
<b>Max Playing Time</b>	<input type="text"/> (games will take at most this long)
<b>Board Game Category</b>	<a href="#">Filter on Board Game Category »</a>
<b>Board Game Mechanic</b>	<a href="#">Filter on Board Game Mechanic »</a>
<b>Board Game Subdomain</b>	<a href="#">Filter on Board Game Subdomain »</a>

### *BoardGameGeek Advanced Search parameters*

<b>Board Game Subdomain</b>	<a href="#">Filter on Board Game Subdomain »</a> ( + for include, - for exclude )					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstract Games	<input type="checkbox"/> [-]	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Games	<input type="checkbox"/> [-]	<input type="checkbox"/> Customizable Games	<input type="checkbox"/> [-]
	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Games	<input type="checkbox"/> [-]	<input type="checkbox"/> Party Games	<input type="checkbox"/> [-]	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy Games	<input type="checkbox"/> [-]
	<input type="checkbox"/> Thematic Games	<input type="checkbox"/> [-]	<input type="checkbox"/> Wargames	<input type="checkbox"/> [-]		

### *BoardGameGeek Advanced Search parameters: Subdomain*

Filter on Board Game Category » ( + for include, - for exclude )						
Board Game Category	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstract Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Action / Dexterity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Adventure	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Age of Reason	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> American Civil War	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian Wars	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> American Revolutionary War	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> American West	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ancient	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Animals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Arabian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Aviation / Flight	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bluffing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Book	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Card Game	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Game	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> City Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil War	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Civilization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Collectible Components	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Comic Book / Strip	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Deduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Dice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Expansion for Base-game	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Exploration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fan Expansion	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Farming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Horror	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Humor	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry / Manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean War	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mafia	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Math	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mature / Adult	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Maze	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Medieval	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Memory	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Miniatures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern Warfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Movies / TV / Radio theme	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Murder/Mystery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mythology	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Napoleonic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Nautical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Novel-based	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Number	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Party Game	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pike and Shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pirates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-Napoleonic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Print & Play	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Puzzle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Racing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Real-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Renaissance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Science Fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Space Exploration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spies/Secret Agents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Territory Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Trains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Trivia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Video Game Theme	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam War	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Wargame	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Word Game	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> World War I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> World War II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Zombies	<input type="checkbox"/>

### BoardGameGeek Advanced Search parameters: Categories

Filter on Board Game Mechanic » ( + for include, - for exclude )						
Board Game Mechanic	<input type="checkbox"/> Acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Action / Movement Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Action Point Allowance System	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Area Control / Area Influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Area Enclosure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Area Movement	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Area-Impulse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Auction/Bidding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Betting/Wagering	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Campaign / Battle Card Driven	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Card Drafting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Chit-Pull System	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Commodity Speculation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Crayon Rail System	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Deck / Pool Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Dice Rolling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Grid Movement	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hex-and-Counter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hidden Traitor	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Line Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Memory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Modular Board	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper-and-Pencil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pattern Building	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pattern Recognition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pick-up and Deliver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Player Elimination	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Point to Point Movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Press Your Luck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rock-Paper-Scissors	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Role Playing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Roll / Spin and Move	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rondel	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Route/Network Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Secret Unit Deployment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Set Collection	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Simultaneous Action Selection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Singing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Stock Holding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Take That	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Trick-taking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Variable Phase Order	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Variable Player Powers	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Voting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Worker Placement	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### BoardGameGeek Advanced Search parameters: Mechanic

## Core Course Work

### Libraries, Politics, and Communities: Inflection Points

#### Introduction

Libraries are bound by responsibilities to serve their communities. Part of serving a community is providing resources, including books and programming, aimed at producing informed and engaged community members (Lankes, 2016). This paper is an investigation into how one library, The Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library, pushed back against “common sense” (Omi and Winant, 1994) after the Monterey Park City Council voted to disband their library board of trustees. In exploring this topic, an understanding of how the values of a political organization and the social norms of a community may or may not align with the values of libraries and librarians who, due to their professionalization around sensitivities of the constructedness of information, promote ideals of information access and literacy (Cooke, Sweeney, & Noble, 2016). Amid changing demographics and a hostile political climate, libraries serve as points of inflection, pushing up against and shaping normative forces in social, political, and technical systems.

#### Literature Review

In *Racial Formation in the United States*, Omi and Winant outline racial formation as “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed.” Key to this formation is the concept of hegemony, borrowed from Antonio Gramsci,

who argued that “hegemony was always constituted by a combination of coercion and consent.”

While rule can be obtained by force, it cannot be maintained without consent. This is achieved through developing “a popular system of ideas and practices ... which he calls ‘common sense.’”

Thus, “common sense” is a system, reinforced by practices, that engenders a normative social landscape.

Gramsci notes that the ruling group, or the group who is enforcing the normative values, is in direct opposition to the subordinated group, or those whose values are not in line with the ruling group. The ruling group achieves consent by incorporating the values of the subordinated group once their value system has been normalized by coercion. According to Omi and Winant, racial formation has already occurred at a systematic level, employed through social tools of religion and philosophy and made real in political and social practice (1994).

George Lipsitz in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* calls out the whiteness of the social substrate that pervades throughout American and Western discourse and politics (1995). Lipsitz identifies several policies and practices that directly and disproportionately benefit white citizens while inversely marginalizing minority communities. In order to perpetuate this practice, Lipsitz notes the possessive investment in whiteness, or policies that are seemingly neutral but exclude minorities by design and further perpetuate the “White” substrate.

In Lipsitz’s analysis, the “contrast between the black experiences and white opinions... cannot be attributed solely to ignorance or intolerance on the part of individuals but stems instead from

the overdetermined inadequacy of the language of liberal individualism to describe collective experience. As long as we define social life as the sum total of conscious and deliberate individual activities, then only *individual* manifestations of personal prejudice and hostility will be seen as racist. Systemic, collective, and coordinated behavior disappears from sight” (Lipsitz, 1995). This analysis not only outlines how whiteness is perpetuated, but how, without language or framework with which to confront it, it's also rendered invisible.

When the whiteness of social fabric is exposed, whites generally become uncomfortable, defensive, angry, and silent, or dismiss themselves from the situation. Robin DiAngelo aptly names this phenomenon: White Fragility (2011). In *White Fragility* DiAngelo points out that one of the factors, among many, that inculcate White Fragility is that “whites are taught at the same time to see their perspectives as objective and representative of reality” while “they are also taught to value the individual and to see themselves as individuals rather than as part of a racially socialized group.” This internal inconsistency “allows whites to view themselves as unique and original, outside of socialization and unaffected by the relentless racial messages in the culture” (DiAngelo, 2011).

Given the racial formation that has procured the whiteness which pervades throughout contemporary social fabric, the study of the events that unfolded between the city of Monterey Park and the Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library in the 1980s offers a point of inquiry into this hegemonic process. Libraries, as communal spaces that have at their core a value set driven by their communities and rights to information and knowledge creation (Lankes, 2016), are

uniquely situated to call attention to these social practices. Whether the library practices critical information literacy (Elmborg, 2006) or queer theory (Drabinski, 2013), librarians and libraries are critically engaged with the knowledge organization systems they work within and teach about daily, enforcing and challenging the notions of information literacy and organizational structures that are prevalent within the library while at the same time critically engaging with those power systems extrinsic to the library.

The White substrate is evidenced in the events that transpired during the 1980s in Monterey Park where debates about social norms and rampant political positioning mirrored the national discourse of the same. Monterey Park explored several political maneuvers which, viewed through the lens of Whiteness, expose how the politics impacting the library and Monterey Park community fit within the hegemonic regime. Much like the low hanging overpasses built on Long Island in the 1920s through 1970s by Robert Moses, built to prevent buses from traveling beneath and by extension make it difficult for certain classes to move about the city (Langdon, 1986), city council members used infrastructural and political design to shape the agency of various communities within Monterey Park. Language featured prominently in these debates as a particular tool utilized to enforce Whiteness, extending from storefronts to the library. Due to the changing demographics of Monterey Park, the politics of the library and the city council intersected. This intersection will be explored throughout this article.

## Discussion

### The Library

The Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library was established in 1929 to “provide public library service for the people of Monterey Park” (History of the Library, 2019). As of 2019, the Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library notes that its mission is to “meet the cultural, educational, and informational needs of residents of the City of Monterey Park by providing free and open access to its resources and services” (Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library Strategic Plan 2015-2018, 2015), a mission that largely reflects the original mission statement of the library.

In living this mission, the Monterey Park Library provides a number of services and resources in support of the Monterey Park communities. In 1984, the library began its Literacy for All of Monterey Park (LAMP) program, providing adult and family literacy programs for members (History of the Library, 2019). Today the library has programs daily, including weekly literacy classes, bilingual, family, baby, and preschool storytimes, computer labs, and other community events. Library Signage is consistently trilingual in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. The library’s holdings remain vastly multilingual and offer a newspaper room with material in Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese (Garcia, personal communication, 18 May, 2019).

Monterey Park Library’s mission, familiar among librarians, is where a library and the communities it serves push up against the social norms embedded in political and technical



structures. It may also, on the other hand, exist as an enforcement of hegemonic values depending on how it responds to external pressures and composes its resources. Pawley, also working with Gramsci's definition of hegemony, reminds us that "educational institutions are of central importance in the transmission of an effective dominant culture" (1998). Pawley continues, citing Raymond Williams, "'the process of education; the processes of a much wider social training within institutions like the family; the practical definitions and organization of work; the selective tradition as an intellectual and theoretical level: all these forces are involved in a continual making and remaking of an effective dominant culture...' To experience twentieth-century educational institutions -- schools, colleges, universities, and libraries -- is to experience the class system unobtrusively at work" (Pawley, 1998).

### The City

Monterey Park is located directly east of Los Angeles City in San Gabriel Valley and has seen large demographic changes since its incorporation in 1916. As of July 2018, Monterey Park was 67.1% Asian or Asian American (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Monterey Park city, California, 2019), though as with any community, these numbers are always in flux. In 1970, the Asian population of Monterey Park was about 14%. In 1980, the United States Census reports that Other Races, Non-Hispanic (which includes those identifying themselves as "American Indian and Alaska Native alone", "Asian alone", "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone", "some other race alone", or of more than one race) was 35.1%. This same population was at 57.2% in 1990. Over the same time, the White, Non-Hispanic population went from 56% in 1970, 24.9% in 1980, and 11.8% in 1990 while the Total Hispanic population went from 30% in

1970. 38.8% in 1980, and 30.4% in 1990 (SOCDS Census Data Output: Monterey Park city, CA, 2019) (Monterey Park : Nation's 1st Suburban Chinatown, 1987b).

As a result of these shifting demographics, Monterey Park experienced a marked increase in reactionary policies and regressive social practices, largely fueled by conservative and neoliberal ideologies spearheaded by the Reagan administration and the reaction of globalization in the 1970s (Harvey, 2005). As a reaction to the increasing Asian population, and as an indicator of the White social substrate deeply ingrained in the politics of Monterey Park, several policies and outspoken citizens attempted to shape how the city grew.

Monterey Park became known as the "Nation's 1st Suburban Chinatown." In 1986 a decisive city council election was held with three candidates running on a platform of controlled growth of the city. These three council members won and immediately initiated a halt of all construction projects, effectively enacting a moratorium on new condominiums and apartment buildings in an effort to curtail further change to the community population (Monterey Park : Nation's 1st Suburban Chinatown, 1987b).

The new council pushed for English only signage, requiring the use of "English words" on storefronts with the stated reason that there was a "need for police and fire personnel to be able to readily identify the location of a business during an emergency" (Stronger Rules on English in Signs Pushed by Council, 1985). However, city council members were quick to suggest that this ordinance was necessary to "emphasize that English is our unifying language" nodding to the

recently failed measure to declare English the official language of the city. Interestingly, certain signs considered “universal”, such as Shell gas station signs, were exempt from this ordinance (Chinese Only” Monterey Park Sees the Signs, 1985).

### The Trial

In 1987 the city council voted 3-2 to disband the library’s board and instate a commission, giving the city absolute power over all library decisions (In Monterey Park : Council Sued in Takeover of Library, 1988). Librarians and ex-board members feared that the stated purpose of this action, controlling the library’s finances, was a red herring and ultimately an effort to politicize the library, pulling it into the racist discourse the city was experiencing. Librarians also cited fears of book bannings, a trend prevalent nationwide (Court Decision Reinstating Library Board, 1989).

There are several social and political factors, both local and national, to consider when exploring the tension between the Monterey Park Library and the city of Monterey Park. From national conversations of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005) and a slew of book bannings and ensuing court cases (in particular the 1982 the Supreme Court ruling in *Board of Education v. Pico* (Lam, 2011)), to the push to make English the official language of Monterey Park and resulting ordinances for English signage (Stronger Rules on English in Signs Pushed by Council, 1985) to the bumper sticker on the mayor Barry Hatch’s car proclaiming “Control Immigration Now!” (Controversy Is OK With Him : New Monterey Park Mayor’s Views Stir Up the Residents, 1988), Monterey Park was at the cross section of White Fragility and Racial Formation.

Interesting developments relevant to the court case include the city's concern of the library's bank accounts not in purview of the city. One of these accounts had recently spent \$18,000 on their Asian Book collection (Monterey Park : City Takes Over Library, 1987a). In that vein, librarians voiced concern of the possibility of book bannings, citing a recent rash of bannings nationwide (In Monterey Park : Council Sued in Takeover of Library, 1988). A prior board member of Friends of the Library noted that disbanding the board "opened the door to politicizing the library" (In Monterey Park : Council Sued in Takeover of Library, 1988). This comment begs the question of whether the library is indeed political, a question that scholars and academics now largely consider put to rest, as libraries and knowledge organization systems generally function as structures of power (Drabinski, 2013). In the case of the Monterey Park Library, the fact that the city council found it necessary to dissolve the library board indicates that, to them, the library was clearly political. In the case of Monterey Park, the politics of the library was community engagement, inclusion, literacy, and making information resources accessible to different audiences, politics captured in the library's mission statement.

Given these politics, in 1988 the Friends of the Library of Monterey Park and ex-board members brought a lawsuit against the city claiming that the dissolution of the board was unlawful in a case known as *Friends of the Library of Monterey Park v. City of Monterey Park* (Court Decision Reinstating Library Board, 1989). The plaintiff, Friends of the Library, won the case and the library board was reinstated, setting a precedent in California for similar future cases and causing interest among cities and libraries nationwide (Monterey Park Library Litigation, 2012).

## Conclusion

The tension between the City of Monterey Park and the Monterey Park Library and the ensuing legal battle exemplifies how libraries exist as inflection points, pushing up against and in a dialectic with established normative hegemonic values. The conflict that played out in California courts in the late 1980s serves as an example of these same conversations occurring historically and contemporarily between the values of libraries and those normative values that constitute the White Substrate prevalent in the United States. These library values are not neutral, however, and efforts to provide information resources to communities inherently shape individuals and communities according to those values. In the case of Monterey Park, the inclusivity of programming and book holdings is both a desire to serve the community and also an effort to incorporate the community into a value set driven by the library's choices.

The events that transpired in Monterey Park reflects how certain individuals in alliance with the White substrate and consequently in positions of power, fight against demographic and social change and exert their power in the name of maintaining the status quo. This phenomenon, aptly described as White Fragility, gives evidence of the individualistic attitudes of race and repression, and fails to acknowledge the invisible systemic nature of racial formation. In Monterey Park, racial formation was propagated via the use of and policies around language. Understanding the events that transpired in Monterey Park as individual choices of a few bad actors risks missing the point of the substrate that not only allows these choices to occur, but flourish. On the other hand, the library, with its investment in multilingual literacy programming

and Chinese reading materials, also understood how language was wielded as a weapon to reinforce the White substrate. Through the commitment to multiple epistemic communities, the library functions as a space where the subversion of this Whiteness can take place.

Librarians can look to what happened in Monterey Park as a model for how to navigate changing communities as well as external pressures impacting their ability to navigate according to their information professional value set. Librarians must be careful to incorporate the values of marginalized communities while at the same time avoid pulling those marginalized communities into a homogenized culture of Whiteness. As part of this professionalization, librarians must be sensitive to this White Substrate and know how to hedge White Fragility, achievable through incorporating critical notions of values and communities in their librarianship training (Cooke, Sweeney, & Noble, 2016).

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# List of Courses

**Fall 2014**

IS 200 Information and Society - Leah Lievrouw

**Fall 2018**

IS 211 Artifacts & Cultures - Johanna Drucker

IS 260 Description & Access - Gregory Leazer

IS 289 Digital Methods for Research & Scholarship - Johanna Drucker

**Winter 2018**

IS 270 Systems & Infrastructures - Jean-François Blanchette

IS 272 Human & Computer Interaction - Leah Lievrouw

DH 201 Introduction to Digital Humanities - Miriam Posner

**Spring 2019**

IS 212 Values and Communities - Sarah Roberts

IS 213 Current Issues in Librarianship - Gregory Leazer

IS 464 Metadata - Jonathan Furner

**Fall 2019**

IS 271 Introduction to Computer Systems and Programming - Joshua Gomez

IS 431 Archives, Records, and Memory - Anne Gilliland

ENG 203 Computers and Literary Research - Danny Snelson

**Winter 2020**

IS 241 Digital Preservation - Anne Gilliland

IS 400 Professional Development and Portfolio Design - Safiya Noble

IS 480 Introduction to Media Archiving & Preservation - Shawn Vancour

**Spring 2020**

IS 410 Management Theory and Practice for Information Professionals - Sarah Roberts

IS 433 Community Based Archives - Michelle Caswell

DH 299 Directed Research in Digital Humanities - Willeke Wendrich

## Advising History

Throughout my time as a student I was under the advisorship of Professors Shawn Vancour and Jonathan Furner. During my first year, Professor Shawn Vancour was instrumental in assisting with my new graduate student life, advising me on issues related to student employment and bureaucratic obstacles I came across. At the beginning of my second year I changed my advisor to Professor Jonathan Furner who has provided me with insight and direction towards my academic interests. Beyond my advisors I was supported by many faculty in the department while an MLIS student. In particular, I would like to thank Professors Jean-François Blanchette, Johanna Drucker, and Gregory Leazer for their support as I applied to PhD programs over the last year.

The following is a list of meeting dates and faculty I met with over the course of my MLIS degree. This list is in no way exhaustive as I had several informal meetings and encounters over the last two years with many faculty.

**2018 November 7** - Shawn Vancour: Mid point first quarter meeting

**2018 December 5** - Shawn Vancour: End of fall quarter meeting

**2019 January 10** - Shawn Vancour: Quick meeting

**2019 February 28** - Shawn Vancour: Winter Quarter meeting

**2019 June 3** - Shawn Vancour: End of year one meeting

**2019 Spring** - Jonathan Furner: Discuss possible advising change in year two

**2019 September 26** - Shawn Vancour: Start of year one meeting

**2019 October 10** - Jonathan Furner: Change of advisor

**2019 October 11** - Gregory Leazer: Discussion of major paper

**2019 October 28** - Jonathan Furner: Portfolio 50 word statement

**2019 November 1** - Jonathan Furner: PhD application discussion

**2020 February 11** - Jonathan Furner: Intent to present portfolio

**2020 April 16** - Jonathan Furner: Discussion of issue paper progress

# Curriculum Vitae

## EDUCATION

### **University of California, Los Angeles 2020 -**

- PhD in Information Studies

### **University of California, Los Angeles 2018 - 2020**

- Master of Library and Information Science
- Digital Humanities Certificate

### **University of Cincinnati 2006 - 2011**

- Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy
- Graduated with Honors

## EXPERIENCE

### **Research and Instructional Technology Consultant – UCLA Humanities Technology**

*September 2019 - Present*

- Support the Humanities with technological needs. Advance Digital Humanities faculty research projects.
- Advise faculty on the learning management system for the Humanities while encouraging best practices for technology and pedagogy in the classroom.
- Meet and consult with faculty in the Digital Humanities Research Accelerator program to explore approaches for identifying research needs
- Assist faculty in the execution of their research through Digital Humanities best practices, utilizing data visualization, website design, and project management principles to ensure projects stay on track.

### **Digital Library Intern – UCLA Digital Library Program June 2019 - September 2019**

- Process digital collections by optimizing images, audio, and metadata in preparation for serving collections online.
- Write and update Python scripts as well as automate data creation to optimize workflow efficiency.
- Test the user experience of digital collections to provide feedback on collection search and functionality.

- Create documentation for new processes.

**Lab Assistant – UCLA GSEIS Information Studies Lab** *October 2018 - June 2019*

- Serve the Information Studies community through workshop development, maintenance of tools, and outreach.
- Process data using Excel, R, and Python in order to advance multiple Information Study Lab projects.
- Develop workshops around data creation, curation, manipulation, and visualization.
- Conduct research on developing critical praxis in research labs.

**Graduate Student Researcher – UCLA Digital Humanities Program** *October 2018 - June 2019*

- Perform analysis on curricular materials and survey results in order to develop a high level overview of the Digital Humanities minor.
- Design data visualizations using Tableau based on student and course data in the Digital Humanities.
- Interpret program data using textual mining and analysis to develop program narratives.
- Align program curriculum with taxonomies and learning outcomes with course offerings.

**Instructional Technologist – UCLA Extension: Instructional Design and Learning Support** *2013 - 2018*

- Research and implement new technologies and methodologies for providing online learning experiences; develop and deliver training materials through courses, information portals, and workshops; manage system implementations and ensure systems are integrated in a way that maximizes the user experience.
- Train UCLA Extension instructors, in one instance training nearly 200 instructors in 3 months, on new software, providing individualized feedback around technical and pedagogical best practices.
- Participate as an active member of various committees as well as served as a subject matter expert for the Learning Management System and Student Information System.
- Create various scripts for streamlining repetitive tasks and customizing user interfaces, saving an estimated 100 hours of manual processes per quarter.
- Assist with the development of a production studio as well as an exploratory space for staff and instructors, selecting tools, configuring, and inventorying software.

## SKILLS

HTML, CSS, JS, API scripting and website design

Python, PHP, SQL, R, Bash programming

Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, and Illustrator  
 Github and Heroku hosting and testing  
 Textual mining and topic modeling  
 Tableau and R data visualization  
 Microsoft Excel, Word, and Access  
 Windows, macOS, and Linux  
 Canvas, Blackboard, Moodle LMS; LTI standards

Curricular design and literacy instruction  
 Metadata XML, XSL creation and mapping  
 Wordpress, Drupal, and Omeka CMS  
 AV setup and maintenance  
 Agile project management  
 OpenRefine data cleaning  
 UX/UI design and testing

## ORGANIZATIONS

**MLIS Student Governing Board** - Co-Chair and Social Sciences Council liaison

- Meet with student group leaders to assess needs and host events for student socialization and involvement

**Social Sciences Council** - Graduate Students Association representative and Financial Chair

- Attend the Graduate Students Association forum as a voting member

**ASIS&T at UCLA** - Vice President

**Artifacts at UCLA** - Webmaster

**Readme at UCLA** - Member

**Society for Social Studies of Science (4S)** - Member

**Association for Information Science and Technology** - Member

**Art Libraries Society, Southern California** - Web Editor

## AWARDS

**Hal Borko Student Award** - 2020

- Recognizing an outstanding graduate student in the Department of Information Studies

**UCLA Staff Appreciation and Recognition (STAR) Award** - 2015

- Recognizing exceptional performance and significant contributions supporting organizational goals

## SERVICE

**UCLA Department of Information Studies Strategic Plan Revision**

- Represented MLIS students for the departmental revision of the Strategic Plan

**UCLA Department of Information Studies Program Manager Hiring Committee**

- Served as the student representative on the hiring committee for the Program Manager position

## **VOLUNTEER**

### **ARLIS/NA 2019 Annual Conference**

- Assist with the setup and facilitation of the Makerspace

### **USC 2019 Archives Bazaar**

- Greet visitors and direct participants to correct locations

### **Los Angeles Mycological Society 2019 Mushroom Fair**

- Conduct fungi identification and answered attendee questions

### **UCLA jane b semel HCI Community Garden**

- Host multiple workshops on fermentation, engaging students with hands-on fermentation techniques

## Supporting Documentation

The supporting documentation for my portfolio is primarily digital and can be found on my website, <https://nickschwieterman.info/>.



## Accessibility Statement

This portfolio strives to be accessible in two distinct ways. First and foremost, the portfolio aims to meet all standards set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) so that the site is accessible to all kinds of users. These guidelines ensure that web content is not created for a universal user, but has many users of all kinds in mind. Furthermore, following these standards ensures that the content is maximally compatible with many kinds of devices and on various types of internet connections. To this end, I created this portfolio using a Jekyll theme AcademicPages, which is forked from the Minimal Mistakes theme, all hosted on Github. By using a moderately popular theme on an established platform I am ensuring that my site meets the standardized accessibility guidelines as much as possible.

Secondly my portfolio aims to be sustainable, or accessible through preservation. It is known and understood that the digital medium is volatile and corrupts more quickly than analog counterparts. Complicating these matters further is the rapid pace of change to digital standards and platforms. Again, my choice to host the portfolio on an established platform with an established theme was made to hedge against these digital dimensions. I also link to an accessible PDF version of my portfolio that can be downloaded and printed. While the PDF version cannot be interacted with in the same way, the tradeoff is a more static and sustainable medium.