**Report of the liaison from ACRL RBMS Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Group**

 **[SAC22-MW/1.6] – Jennifer Bradshaw**

**January 2022**

For my first report as the ARCL RBMS Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Group (CVEG) liaison to SAC, I like to introduce myself and the work of CVEG. I am the Metadata Production Coordinator and Rare Materials Cataloger at the University of Iowa Libraries. I have been involved with CVEG since 2016, and I will take on the role of co-editor of the RBMS Controlled Vocabulary in 2023. I was a part of the Thesaurus Integration Subgroup from 2019-2021 and lead the Website Review Team in fall 2021.

**Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging**

The description below is primarily of the integrated thesaurus ([Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging](https://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/rbmscv.html)), which is not yet approved for use, but it also applies to the current, in-use thesauri ([RBS Controlled Vocabularies](https://rbms.info/vocabularies/)).

**Description**

The Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging (CVRMC) is an ANSI/NISO Z39.19 compliant controlled vocabulary that provides terminology designed to facilitate access to special collections resources, especially rare books and manuscripts.

**Scope of Work statement**

The RBMS Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging maintains terms specific to the needs of the rare materials community. New terms are added at the request of community members and vetted for inclusion by the Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Group. General terms that are already accessible in other equivalent vocabularies will not be added unless a specific, differentiating rare materials definition exists.

**Bias Statement**

CVEG acknowledges responsibility for our role in the deeply embedded and systemic racism, both historical and current, that is apparent throughout the CVRMC. We also recognize that the current and historical membership of CVEG and RBMS is predominantly white. Although we are making continuous efforts to improve those biases of which we are aware and to identify and rectify those we are not, the editors welcome any and all feedback regarding harm caused or suggestions for term or scope changes or additions.

Furthermore, the six original thesauri from which CVRMC was created (see the following History section) were developed with a focus on Western book history and traditions, and we wish to acknowledge this shortfall and proceed with transparency in its development and ongoing use.

**Guiding principles**

The Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging responds to the needs of the rare materials community and capitalizes on the community’s expertise to achieve maximum impact for the rare materials description community of practice.

The CVRMC is developed in the context of an environment with evolving technological capabilities, companion standards, and numerous other major controlled vocabularies.

The CVRMC endeavors to retain relevance, longevity, and consistency over time.

**History**

The CVRMC was originally developed as six separate print thesauri in response to the creation of dedicated MARC fields for recording the genre and physical characteristics of cataloged materials. The six thesauri are Genre Terms, Printing and Publishing Evidence, Provenance Evidence, Binding Terms, Type Evidence, and Paper Terms. All six thesauri were migrated to a digital format hosted on the RBMS website in 2005, as the RBMS Controlled Vocabularies for Use in Rare Book and Special Collections Cataloging. Under the aegis of the Bibliographic Standards Committee (BSC), the Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Group was created in July 2014 for the dedicated maintenance and continued development of the vocabularies.

 With the adoption of Resource Description and Access (RDA) as a national cataloging standard in 2013 by the Library of Congress, development of cataloging tools has begun to shift away from MAchine Readable Cataloging (MARC) to linked open data. In light of the ongoing development of data models for linked data cataloging, such as BIBFRAME, CVEG recognized that the special collections cataloging community would be best served by publishing the existing thesauri as linked open data. This prompted a reevaluation of the terms across the six thesauri and the incorporation of these terms into a single, integrated thesaurus: the RBMS Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging.

 For maximum utility and effect, linked open data requires robust and sustainable hosting that can support the maintenance of stable URIs. CVEG made the decision to partner with Library of Congress (LC) to host the thesaurus on the LC linked data service. CVEG maintains intellectual control of the CVRMC, continuing to provide editorial oversight for the thesaurus, while LC provides searching and access.

**Application Instructions**

The CVRMC applies a faceted approach to its organizational structure. Each fundamental facet is intended to represent an intellectually distinct and mutually exclusive category. Within each facet, terms are hierarchically arranged for ease of browsing and discoverability. Although every effort has been made to allow facets to remain distinct, there are areas of semantic overlap, and some terms are contained within more than one facet. Because of this, the CVRMC should not be considered purely faceted in its construction or application.

**Subdivision**

The CVRMC does not maintain chronological or geographical subdivision terms, which are deemed outside the scope of this vocabulary. Terms should not be subdivided.

**Maintenance of RBMS CVRMC**

**Updates**

CVEG provides updates to the Library of Congress Linked Data Service as needed, and at least on a quarterly basis, that include all new or updated terms.

**Submission of terms**

CVEG will resume accepting submission of new terms when the new thesaurus is approved for use. Terms are evaluated by CVEG to ensure they are appropriate according to the established scope of work.

New or substantively edited terms are announced and made available for community feedback on the CVEG comments blog at rbms.info/cv-comments. Terms being considered for inclusion or editing are open for comment for a minimum of two weeks.

**Warrant for inclusion**

The CVEG traditionally relied on literary warrant (as defined by the ANSI/NISO Z39.19 standard) when determining the form and scope of terms. However, we recognize that literary warrant can perpetuate harmful language, especially for those terms relating to historically marginalized groups. Thus, when working with such terms, we weigh other factors, such as the preferences of the group being described, when deciding on preferred forms of terms and scope notes.

Additionally, the CVEG may elect to rely on user warrant if literary warrant is unavailable and sufficient need for the term exists within the community.

**Definitions**

*Literary warrant*: Justification for the representation of a concept in an indexing language or for the selection of a preferred term because of its frequent occurrence in the literature.

*User warrant*: Justification for the representation of a concept in an indexing language or for the selection of a preferred term because of frequent requests for information on the concept or free-text searches on the term by users of an information storage and retrieval system.

**2021 CVEG Work**

In 2021 CVEG completed the integration of the separate thesauri into the RBMS Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging. This process involved evaluating existing terms and hierarchical structures to ensure clarity for users in application of terms and ensure individual terms represent wholly distinct concepts.

The beta version of the new linked-data RBMS Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging is now available on the Library of Congress’ Linked Data service: <https://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/rbmscv.html>. CVEG will be soliciting feedback via a survey in the next few months. We are looking for suggestions of additional ways to announce the survey so we can get the broadest possible feedback.

Additionally, the Prejudicial Materials Working Group, an on-going subgroup of CVEG, is examining the existing vocabulary for terminology with DEI implications and examining and expanding Literature of Prejudice hierarchy, including broadening terms to be applicable to non-literary materials, such as graphics. We also plan to hold a review period for these new and revised terms later this year.

CVEG is looking forward to reopening the submission of new terms, as well as our ongoing work of crafting scope notes for each term. We are also hoping to begin work on adding terms that expand the vocabulary beyond the existing focus on Western book history and traditions.