

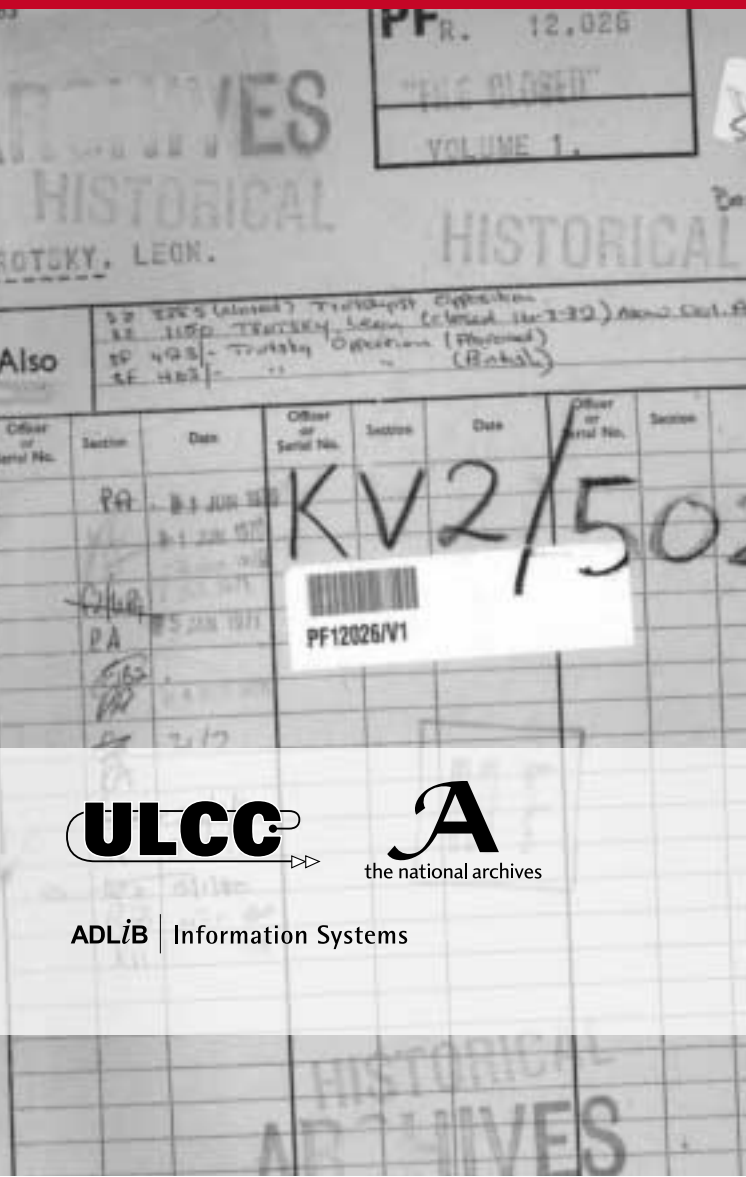
UKAT's partners

The development of UKAT has been supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, with additional funding and support from the University of London Computer Centre and the National Archives. The project is using thesaurus management software donated by Adlib Information Systems.

Contacting UKAT

UKAT

UK Archival Thesaurus



ADLIB Information Systems

Email

support@ukat.org.uk

Post

UKAT Project Editor, ULCC,
20 Guilford Street, London
WC1N 1DZ, United Kingdom

www.ukat.org.uk

Images of documents used in this leaflet have been reproduced courtesy of the National Archives.



www.ukat.org.uk

Setting
the standard
for subject
indexing



Supported by the National Lottery through the
Heritage Lottery Fund

The UK Archival Thesaurus (UKAT) is being developed as a standard for subject indexing in archives. This leaflet explains how UKAT will help archivists, and how archivists can contribute to the project.



Your Feedback

It's in everyone's interest to ensure that UKAT meets the needs of the archive sector. We'd therefore like your feedback on the Thesaurus. Is it relevant to your archive and your users? Are there areas which we need to improve? You can provide feedback using the feedback page on the website. You may also want to become involved in the Advisory Panel which we have set up. For more details, send an email to support@ukat.org.uk.

Why do we need a standard?

Since the publication of the National Council on Archives' Archives On-line report (1998), many UK archives have placed their own finding aids on the internet, or have participated in joint projects to create searchable on-line resources. The Government has set the archive sector the goal of linking these components together to create a truly integrated National Archives Network, with a single point of entry for users, and the ability to search catalogue descriptions across the Network.

Subject indexes have long been an important archival finding aid, allowing researchers to locate records relating to their subjects of interest regardless of provenance or cataloguing methodology. However, while various thesauri, subject indexes and classification schemes are already in use in archives, the archive sector has no agreed subject indexing standard. With the development of the National Archives Network, the need to standardize the terminology used in indexing has become a priority. Users of the Network will need to be confident that a search on a subject term will return "hits" on all the records relating to that subject. If subject searching of the Network is to be effective, then the consistent use of terminology across the entire Network will be essential. UKAT is intended to provide this consistency.

How is UKAT being created?

The subjects or "terms" contained in UKAT are mainly derived from the UNESCO Thesaurus, which is already used in a number of archives and archive projects. In addition, terms which are directly relevant to the holdings of the UK's archives are being added to broaden the scope of the Thesaurus. The UKAT project team is working in partnership with archive repositories and archive projects to extend UKAT's coverage by incorporating terms from various sources. These include terms created or used

by the Access to Archives project (A2A), the Archives Hub, Archives in London and the M25 Area (AIM25), the CASBAH project (Caribbean studies, Black and Asian History), the University of Warwick's Modern Records Centre, the Mundus project (missionary collections), the National Digital Archive of Datasets, and the National Archives.

UKAT's approach is to include more specific terms for those areas of the UNESCO Thesaurus where the terminology is not deemed to be specific enough for the needs of archivists. Extending the coverage of UKAT will also make it easier for researchers to find what they are looking for. A particular emphasis is being given to including terms which relate to the histories and experiences of groups which have traditionally been under-represented among archive users. We believe that including these terms in a national subject standard will help these groups to identify archives relating to their heritage.

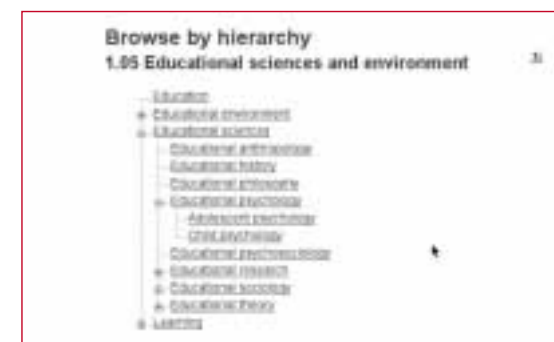
Before they are incorporated into UKAT, terms are edited according to an editing methodology which is based on national and international standards of thesaurus construction. This ensures that terms will be placed in an appropriate position in the Thesaurus. Most terms which are submitted to the project are likely to be included in UKAT, if they are not in the Thesaurus already. However, certain types of terms have been judged to be outside UKAT's scope. UKAT does not include the names of persons, families, places and corporate bodies, and does not normally include terms which appear to be relevant to only a single archive repository.

Using UKAT

Although UKAT is being developed primarily as an internet resource, it will also be made freely available in formats which can be downloaded from the website. In addition, it will be

offered, free-of-charge, to developers of archive cataloguing software, so that it can be more easily supplied to their customers.

The website allows you to browse the Thesaurus alphabetically using the A-Z listing, and hierarchically by microthesaurus. You can also carry out quick and advanced searches for specific terms, as well as submitting new terms and relationships.



Getting involved in UKAT

UKAT is a collaborative effort: the Thesaurus is being built from terms submitted by archivists and users of archives. If you're an archivist and you believe that the terms which your office uses for subject indexing would be useful to others, then please submit them to us and we'll consider them for inclusion in UKAT. Remember: we can only include these terms in the Thesaurus if you tell us about them! Submitting terms can be done either by using the submission forms on the website, or by email or post. If you have a lot of terms which you would like to submit, it may be easier to send us the data in digital or paper form, rather than via the website. Contact us for details of which formats we can support.