

UK Archival Thesaurus

Where we've come from, where
we're going

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Overview

- Basics - aims, deliverables, milestones
- Background to the project: why UKAT?
- Work to date
- Lessons learnt
- How you can get involved
- Future developments

UKAT basics

- Based at ULCC, funded by HLF
- June 2003 - July 2004
- Aims: to create a subject thesaurus for the archive sector, which will
 - Promote more consistent subject indexing
 - Promote more effective subject searching
 - Support the discovery of resources relating to under-represented groups

UKAT basics

Project deliverables:

- Editing of terms submitted by archives, projects and users
- Website
- Import files for Calm, Adlib etc
- Outreach: workshops, leaflets, talks

UKAT milestones

- Feb 2003: start of project
- Jun 2003: appointment of Editor, Advisory Panel. Editing methodology. Editing started.
- Dec 2003: website live. First workshop.
- Feb 2004: leaflets posted.
- Mar-Apr 2004: evaluation.
- May-Jun 2004: website refinements, import files. Second workshop.
- Jul 2004: end of project.

Background - why UKAT?

- Emergence of National Archives Network
- Goal of National Archives Network portal: the 'Archives Gateway' (Archives Task Force report)
- Need for a *common terminology* to support subject searching of network

Background - why UKAT?

- But ... no 'joined up' terminology for archives
- Drawbacks of existing schemes (e.g. LCSH, UNESCO)
- Existing schemes subject to local amendments

Background - why UKAT?

- Need to promote use of archives by wider range of groups
- BASA: subject indexes and other finding aids can help 'open up' archives
- Experience of CASBAH
- Need a standard with ready-made terminology to bring out the 'hidden' histories in archives

Work to date - editing

- Appointment of editor
- Methodology based on BS 5723
- Approach:
 - *UNESCO Thesaurus* used as basis - excluding countries and names
 - Integrate submitted terms and relationships
 - Add polyhierarchies
 - Seek out terms relevant to inclusion objectives

Work to date - editing

As at 11 June 2004:

- 6700 terms inherited from UNESCO
- 13,400 terms contributed
- 10,500 edited ('approved', 'pending' or 'rejected')
- around 2900 remaining ('candidate')

Work to date - editing

Sources of terms - projects:

- Archives Hub (2715)
- AIM25 (2011)
- West Sussex Picture the Past (563)
- Archives Network Wales (274)
- Mundus (105)
- A2A (102)
- GASHE (91)
- CASBAH (61)
- Baillie, Rebuilding the City

Work to date - editing

National institutions:

- BBC (137)
- UK National Archives (1582)
- NDAD (320)

Local/regional archives:

- Cumbria (253), Essex (1843), Gloucestershire (119), Warwickshire (79), Corporation of London Guildhall Library (276), South East Film and Video Archive (16)

Work to date - editing

Others contributors:

- Britten-Pears Library (Cecilia) (157)
- Halle Orchestra (45)
- Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick (191)
- Salidaa (76)
- HEREIN (482)
- Government Category List (1170)

Work to date - editing

Contributions by sector:

- HE institutions and projects: 39%
- Local authority sector: 24%
- National institutions and projects: 27%
- Others: 10%
- Web submissions: < 1%

Work to date - website

- www.ukat.org.uk
- Available since December 2003
- Information about the project
- Access to the thesaurus
- Contributor registration
- Term submission forms
- Soon: download files

Work to date - website

Evaluation Mar-Apr 2004:

- Questionnaire: 58 responses
- Most (75%+) content with basic thesaurus interfaces easy
- Most agreed with proposed improvements
- Most intended to use UKAT in some form - 12% said would not use
- Feedback from staff at TNA

Work to date - website

Second phase of software development
(May-June) focussing on:

- Calm, Adlib and SKOS-Core files
- Improving interfaces for Candidate terms, Recent additions, Rejected terms A-Z browsing and searching
- Improving term submission facilities

Work to date - outreach

- Workshop in December 2003
- Second workshop in June 2004
- Talks to Calm Users Group, SoA Conference, SoA regions/groups
- Updates in ARC and RM Bulletin
- Leaflets promoting project to archivists and users

What we've learnt

- Need to seek out terms proactively
- Issue of scope - what to include and exclude (names, document types)

What we've learnt

- Incorporating existing terms vs building from scratch - what if the terms don't exist?
- How to reach out to non-archivists?

How you can get involved

- Tell us what you think!
- Contribute terms via the website, email, post (support@ukat.org.uk)
- Tell colleagues and users
- Join the Advisory Panel

Future developments

- Thesauri do not stand still
- Website and database will continue to be hosted by ULCC
- Linking Arms (2006?)
- UKAT 'bridging' project
- Advisory Panel will become editorial committee, with voluntary editorship