

# Virtual AskQC Office Hours

Debiasing Dewey: Righting the past by rewriting the classification

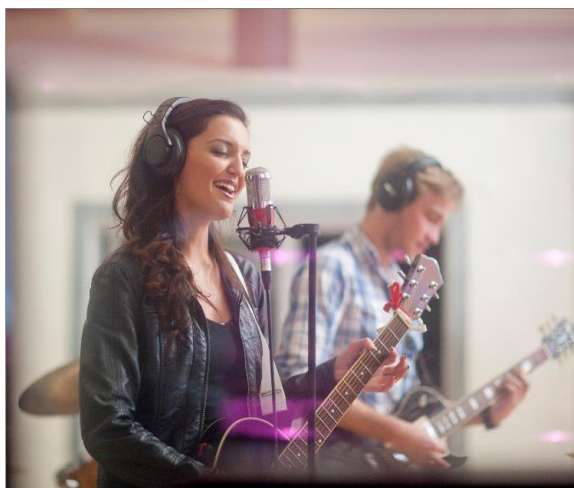
OCLC Metadata Quality

July 2023



# Housekeeping

This session is being recorded



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This session is being recorded  
All session recordings, slides, and notes are available at [oc.lc/askqc](https://oc.lc/askqc)

The screenshot shows the OCLC website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the OCLC logo, a search bar containing the text "How can we help you?", and links for "Release Notes", "System Status Dashboard", and "Contact OCLC Support". Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: "Home > WorldCat > Metadata Quality > AskQC". The main content area is titled "Previous AskQC office hours" and includes a sub-header "Last updated: Apr 16, 2021". Below this, it says "Find past AskQC office hour recordings and supporting materials." A table follows, listing office hours by date and title, with links to supporting materials.

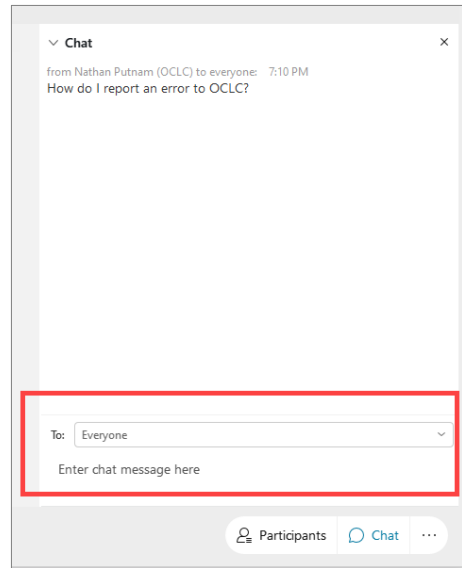
Date	Title	Supporting material
March 2021	PCC and OCLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">WebEx recording - March 9</a></li><li>• <a href="#">WebEx recording - March 18</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Presentation slides</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Summary and member questions</a></li></ul>
February 2021	7xx linking fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">WebEx recording - February 9</a></li><li>• <a href="#">WebEx recording - February 18</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Presentation slides</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Summary and member questions</a></li></ul>

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Enter questions in chat to “Everyone” at any time during the presentation



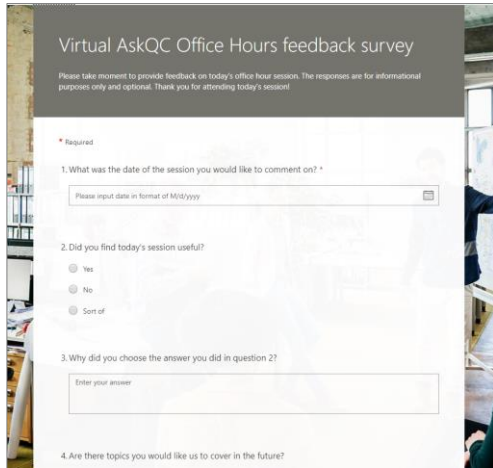
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**After the session, you will be directed to a brief, optional survey**



The screenshot shows a feedback survey titled "Virtual AskQC Office Hours feedback survey". Below the title is a note: "Please take a moment to provide feedback on today's office hour session. The responses are for informational purposes only and optional. Thank you for attending today's session!". The survey consists of four questions:

- 1. What was the date of the session you would like to comment on? \* (Required)  
Please input date in format of MM/DD/YYYY
- 2. Did you find today's session useful?  
 Yes  
 No  
 Sort of
- 3. Why did you choose the answer you did in question 2?  
Enter your answer
- 4. Are there topics you would like us to cover in the future?

## On the call today



**Cynthia Whitacre**  
Senior Metadata Operations  
Manager



**Alex Kyrios**  
Senior Dewey Editor



**Kathryn Becker**  
Dewey Editor in Residence



**Bryan Baldus**  
Senior Data Analyst



# DEBIASING DEWEY

RIGHTING THE PAST BY  
REWRITING THE CLASSIFICATIONS



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## FIRST THINGS FIRST: HOW TO CHANGE THE DDC

- Continuous process
- Dewey editorial team
- Suggestions received from [dewey@oclc.org](mailto:dewey@oclc.org)
- Library of Congress classifiers
- Historic events





CHANGE  
PROCESS

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Identify the problem

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Research the literary warrant and  
current knowledge

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Decide—is this a new topic or a  
change to an existing topic?

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Create an exhibit

CHANGE  
PROCESS

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Present to the editorial review  
committee

---

Make revisions and corrections

---

Present to the editorial review  
committee

---

Make revisions and corrections

## CHANGE PROCESS

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Submit exhibit to Editorial Policy Committee

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EPC is made of 10 international librarians meeting once a year in person, and at least once electronically

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Back to the drawing board! Make revisions/corrections for resubmission via email or for the next EPC meeting.

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Congratulations! Your exhibit has been approved and will be published!



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## THE BIG PICTURE: EARLY BRAINSTORMING

- Terms for groups of people
- Names of Indigenous peoples
- LGBTQIA+ topics
- Western bias
- Christian bias

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EPC 143-T1.2  
TERMINOLOGY  
FOR GROUPS OF  
PEOPLE

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Led by Kelly West

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Aliens → Noncitizens

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Bisexuals → Bisexual people (etc.)

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Investigated further terms



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## FOCUS: DEWEY CARE ABOUT PEOPLE? YOU BET WE DO!

- Groups of people
- Suggested topic creation
- LGBTQIA+ topics

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EPC I44-T5.1  
BLACK & WHITE  
PEOPLE

Inconsistencies were found of reductive single-word terms, specifically “Blacks” instead of “Black people”

Ongoing debate about capitalization amongst publishers

“Caucasian race” needed to be addressed

“of African origin” qualifier and discussion on descent vs ancestry

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WHERE  
TO  
BEGIN?

Historic bias

Underrepresentation

Medicalizing people



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EPC I44-S79.1

“WE’RE ALL BORN  
NAKED, AND THE  
REST IS DRAG”  
—RUPAUL

Born from a librarian request

792.028 Acting and performance, but that wasn’t quite right

306.778 Transvestism (hierarchy of sexual practices), isn’t right either

Created a new division under Stage presentation with 792.72 Drag

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EPC I44-S30.1  
TRANSVESTISM VS  
CROSS DRESSING

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Drag included a lot of discussion on cross dressing

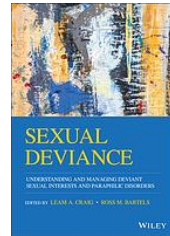
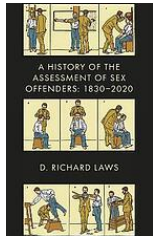
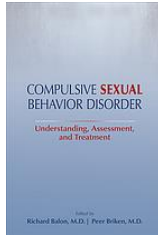
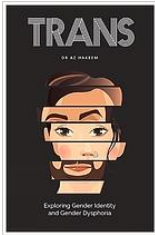
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306.778 Transvestism (Sexual practices hierarchy)  
became a catch-all for any works about cross  
dressing, regardless of the intention

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Current proposal relocates cross dressing to a new  
391 division, while “sexual cross dressing” becomes a  
new term and is absorbed with 306.777

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EPC 144-S61.1  
GENDER  
DYSPHORIA

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If it was easy, it would have been done already.

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616.8583 Sexual disorders and gender-identity disorders

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Problematic for several reasons, to include proximity to sex addiction and sexual abuse of children

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Instructions to class elsewhere, but it didn't always happen

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Changing and adding terms to current division making it 616.8527 Depressive disorder and dysphoria

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## WHAT'S ON DECK?

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Use of outdated terms and what to do about them

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Separating sexual orientation and gender identity

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Examine other areas that may need attention

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Continuation of debiasing terms, headings, and divisions

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OUTDATED  
TERMS

Caucasian race

Mongoloid race

Australoid race

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CONFUSING  
TERMS

Sex

Gender

Sexual Orientation

Gender Identity

NEURODIVERSITY

Autism, Asperger's, and PDD

ADHD

Other differences



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OTHER  
AREAS  
NEEDING  
ATTENTION

Indigenous Peoples

200s Religion

400s Languages

800s Literature

# ANY QUESTIONS?

[dewey@oclc.org](mailto:dewey@oclc.org)  
[ddc.typepad.com](http://ddc.typepad.com)

## On the call today



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Senior Metadata Operations  
Manager



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**Kathryn Becker**  
Dewey Editor in Residence



**Bryan Baldus**  
Senior Data Analyst

# Thank you!

**August Virtual AskQC Office Hours**  
Rapid Harm Reduction with Locally Preferred Subjects in WorldCat Discovery

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Tuesday, 8 Aug. at 10:00 AM Eastern  
Thursday, 17 Aug. at 4:00 PM Eastern

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**Registration and session links available at**  
[oc.lc/askqc](https://oc.lc/askqc)

Send cataloging policy questions at any time to [askqc@oclc.org](mailto:askqc@oclc.org)



Photo by Eric Rothermel on Unsplash