

**LC Policy and Standards Division to authorize use of the subdivision --
Law and legislation under LCSH headings for crimes.
April 24, 2013**

BACKGROUND

In 2008 the Library of Congress' Policy and Standards Division (PSD) devised a plan to identify headings that were considered to be "inherently legal" by the addition of a UF [*heading*]-**Law and legislation** on each of the headings. The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) was consulted, and the policy change was implemented. Since that time, new concepts that are inherently legal have been added to *LCSH* with the addition of the UF [*heading*]-**Law and legislation**.

The "inherently legal" decision exempted headings for crimes because they were considered to be obviously "inherently legal." No UF [*crime*]-**Law and legislation** was added to those headings.

POLICY CHANGE

PSD now wishes to change the treatment of headings for crimes in order to allow the subdivision --**Law and legislation** to be established and used under these headings. This change in policy reflects PSD's commitment to subject headings that explicitly express their meaning and to the intuitive construction and standard application of common subdivisions.

DISCUSSION

Clearly, headings for crimes are "inherently legal." However, it is often difficult to determine if a heading represents a crime without looking at the reference structure of the heading. For example, **Cyberbullying** is in the **Computer crimes** hierarchy, but **Bullying** is not in a crimes hierarchy. According to current policy, **Cyberbullying** would *not* be authorized for subdivision by --**Law and legislation**, but **Bullying** would be. Under the new policy, both headings will be established with the subdivision: **Cyberbullying--Law and legislation** and **Bullying--Law and legislation**.

Another drawback of the existing policy for crime headings is that a crime in one jurisdiction may not be a crime in another. Both jurisdictions would have the heading [*crime*]-[*jurisdiction*]. To identify which work is a discussion of the law, the user might need to know the legal status of the crime in the jurisdiction. Under the new policy, the subject heading with the subdivision --**Law and legislation--[jurisdiction]** will indicate explicitly that the work is about the law in a specific jurisdiction, for example: **Prostitution--Law and legislation--Nevada**.

Additionally, crimes are frequently discussed in the literature in terms of their sociological, psychological, economic, etc., aspects. It is important to be able to

specifically identify that a work is about a law by the assigning the heading **[crime]--Law and legislation**.

Furthermore, general discussions of all aspects of the crime would be listed under the heading for the crime without subdivision, and under existing policy, they are indistinguishable from works about the law. Under the new policy, if a work contains a discussion of the law, the heading **[crime]--Law and legislation** would be assigned. Together the changes make identification of legal works easier for users.

For headings that use specific legal terminology for a crime, such as **Murder**, the new policy will allow the heading to be subdivided by **--Law and legislation**. A UF for the legal term with the subdivision string **--Law and legislation--Criminal provisions** will be added.

Example:

Murder--Law and legislation

UF Murder--Law and legislation--Criminal provisions

The subdivision **--Law and legislation** will also be authorized for use under headings for groups of crimes.

Examples:

Commercial crimes--Law and legislation

Computer crimes--Law and legislation

Hate crimes--Law and legislation

Under the new policy, as under the old one, each new use of the subdivision **--Law and legislation** will be established editorially (as instructed in *Subject Headings Manual H 1705*). Proposals that are submitted for new uses of **[crime]--Law and legislation** [May Subd Geog] will be checked for technical correctness and will achieve approval easily because they can be identified as belonging to the category “crimes.”

REQUEST FOR AALL ASSISTANCE

PSD would like to request the assistance of AALL with identifying all of the crime headings in LCSH that should have the new heading established. A list of such headings would be sufficient. The list should be sent to Libby Dechman (edec@loc.gov) by May 22, 2013.

PROJECT TO IMPLEMENT NEW POLICY

PSD will undertake the project to add headings for currently defined crimes with the subdivision **--Law and legislation**, to revise existing headings as necessary, and to revise bibliographic records. While the project is in progress, if a concept or term for a crime that is new to LCSH, as well as an accompanying heading of the type **[new concept or term crime heading]--Law and legislation**, may be proposed.

The instruction sheet *Subject Headings Manual (SHM)* H 1705 will be revised in 2013 Update no. 2 (Fall).

The project to add [*crime*]**--Law and legislation** headings will begin during the week of May 27, 2013, and should be completed within four to six months. New headings that are a product of this project will appear on a single monthly list. Announcement of the project's completion will appear in the Summary of Decisions, after which proposals may be submitted for individual headings that have been omitted inadvertently. The bibliographic file revision will continue as necessary until complete.

Questions or comments about this policy change should be sent to: Libby Dechman (edec@loc.gov).

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