

# Timeline and Plan for the Next Five Library of Congress Genre/Form Projects

*Report for Beacher Wiggins, ABA Director  
Prepared by the ABA Policy and Standards Division  
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In spring 2007, the Cataloging Policy and Support Office (now the Policy and Standards Division, a.k.a. the Policy Office) embarked on a project to develop authorized genre/form headings, which describe what a work *is* rather than what it is *about*. The first project undertaken was for the discipline of moving images, which includes films, television programs, and video recordings.

CPSO submitted a report to the Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate (ABA), in March 2008, which explained the concept and utility of genre/form headings; the history of the development of MARC coding for genre/form headings and subdivisions; the choice of moving image headings as the experimental group; principles developed by CPSO as the project moved forward; and recommendations for the management of future projects.<sup>1</sup>

In its July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting the ABA managers accepted the report, and authorized the Policy Office to undertake five more projects: cartography, law, literature, music, and religion. They asked that the Policy Office submit a proposed timeline and plan of action for the new projects during the fall of 2008.

The Policy Office has therefore developed a plan that will build on the success of the moving image project by

- Following the principles and recommendations for the management of the genre/form projects, as outlined in the moving image project report;
- Providing opportunities for involvement by other libraries and organizations with an interest in genre/form headings;
- Requesting input from the broader library community at various points in each project; and,
- Furnishing a timeline that will allow for the orderly roll-out of genre/form headings in each of the five disciplines under development.

## **The Plan**

As recommended in the moving image genre/form project report, each of the five initial disciplines – cartography, law, music, religion, and literature – will be treated as a separate project. This incremental development will allow for adjustments as issues are

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<sup>1</sup> For the text of the report, see <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cps/movimgenre.html>.

discovered and resolved, thereby decreasing any negative impact on catalogs and cataloging workflows.

*Coordinator:* To promote consistency across all of the projects, Janis Young has been appointed to be the genre/form coordinator.

*Stakeholders:* Community involvement will be encouraged at all stages of each project. The Policy Office will work with ALA/ALCTS/SAC's Genre/Form Implementation Subcommittee to determine which professional organizations may be interested in directly assisting the Division with policy decisions and the creation of authority records. For example, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) and the Music Library Association (MLA) have already expressed their strong interest in the projects in their disciplines, and AALL is already creating a thesaurus of legal genre/form headings that it wants to present to LC. Organizations focused on literature, geography, and religion may be interested in helping with the projects in those disciplines.

Library of Congress catalogers will also be asked to get involved. Each cataloging division or section directly affected by these projects will be asked to appoint a consultant to the Policy Office, and reference librarians will be consulted as well. These consultants will work with the Policy Office to develop policies and will assist with the creation of authority records as needed.

*Communication and public relations:* The Policy Office will use the Internet as its primary tool to keep LC staff and the general public updated on its progress, and has created a web page dedicated to providing information about genre/form headings (<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsoc/genreformgeneral.html>). Announcements and requests for comment will be posted on this web page at various stages of each project. The Policy Office will also publicize the genre/form activities on discussion lists such as SACOList and Autocat, as well as on more specialized ones.

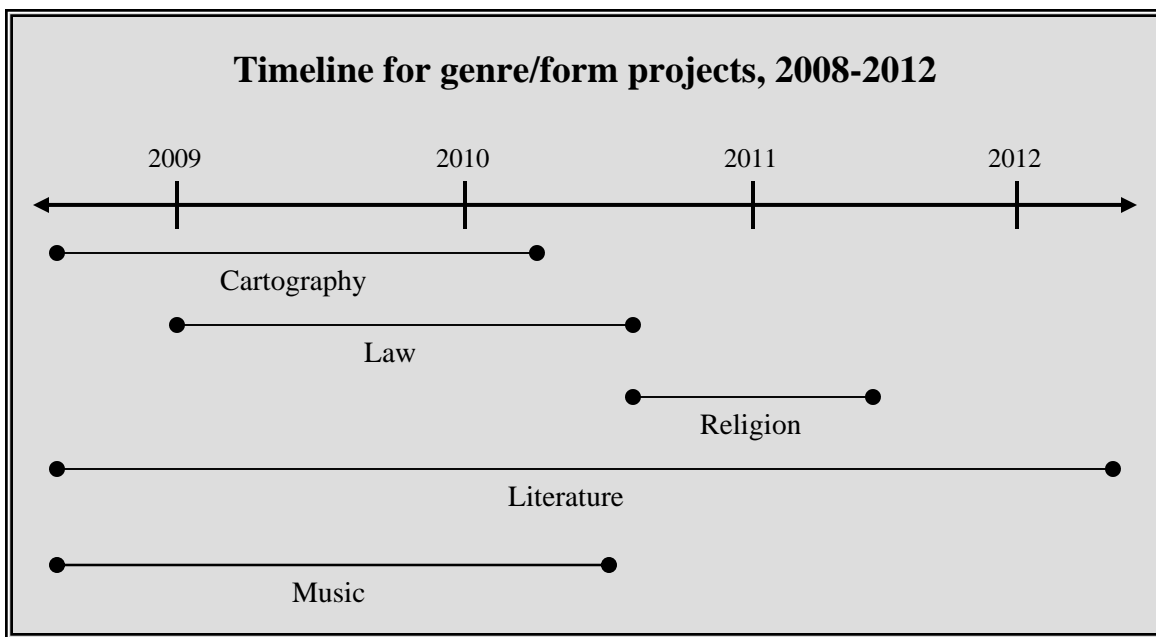
The Genre/Form Coordinator and other LC staff will be responsible for “getting the word out” and gathering input from interested parties. This will be accomplished through conference attendance, including presentations, and personal contact for public relations and teaching purposes. These efforts will provide the Library with invaluable information regarding the public’s opinions about the direction of the projects.

*Activities:* Based on its experiences with the moving image project, the Policy Office has identified several activities that need to be undertaken as each project moves forward. They include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying existing thesauri
- Writing documentation
- Preparing a preliminary list of genre/form headings
- Inputting and/or importing authority records
- Adjusting existing LC subject headings as necessary
- Preparing genre/form authority records for publication on a Weekly List

- Approving headings
- Training LC catalogers
- Implementing the headings on new bibliographic records, and
- Determining what bibliographic file maintenance needs to be assumed by the Data Integrity Section.

These activities are not necessarily sequential; some, such as writing documentation, will be ongoing throughout each project. Most of them can be undertaken in collaboration with professional organizations. Some, like the preliminary documentation and lists of records, also readily lend themselves to calls for comment from the wider library community.



### The Timeline

The five approved projects are shown in the above figure in a suggested timeline, with cartography, law and religion occurring at staggered intervals with music and literature running in tandem.

Cartography will be the first of the new projects to go into full development. It appears that the project will have a relatively small scope in terms of the number of authority records that will be created, although some policy issues may arise. The Genre/Form Coordinator held initial meetings with Geography and Map Division personnel in October 2008.

Regarding law, AALL has a task force that has been working on a thesaurus of genre/form headings. The Policy Office has a representative working with AALL on this initiative, the results of which will be presented to the Library of Congress. After the task

force completes its work in mid-2009, the Policy Office and the Law Section can begin to review and evaluate the AALL recommendations and formalize the proposals.

The Policy Office plans to begin the religion project in late 2010. While the number of headings may in fact be relatively small, there will be many policy issues to resolve, particularly with regard to the relationship between genre/form headings and titles of individual scriptures and holy books.

Music can begin as soon as this plan is approved. Initial contacts between the Policy Office and MLA indicate great enthusiasm on the part of the professional community, as well as a willingness to assist. The effort necessary to develop genre/form headings for music is expected to be enormous, particularly with regard to the fact that the genres and forms of music have traditionally been coded as topical subject headings. Details of this project will be worked out by the Policy Office in collaboration with the Music Division and MLA.

While the other projects are ongoing, the Policy Office will begin to consider the breadth of the project for literature. It is expected that that discipline will be the most difficult to deal with in terms of both scope and policy. For that reason, the project will be undertaken slowly, in measured stages, which will allow for both large and small adjustments as necessary.

As each project is completed the Policy Office will report to ABA management, detailing the successes of the project, the problems encountered and their solutions, and the impacts on cataloging procedures and resource discovery.

### **Additional projects**

Considering the high level of interest in genre/form headings within the library community, the Policy Office may receive outside proposals to develop genre/form headings in additional areas or disciplines. For example, it has received a request to expand the genre/form headings incrementally to include headings for talking books, television soundtracks, and similar headings. Those proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and added to the timeline as appropriate in consultation with the ABA Management Team.

## Appendix

### Detailed Timeline for the Next Five LC Genre/Form Projects, 2008-2012

	Late 2008-Early 2009	Mid 2009	Late 2009-Early 2010	Mid 2010	Late 2010-Early 2011	Mid 2011	Late 2011-2012
<b>Cartography</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine scope of project</li> <li>Post sample headings online</li> <li>Explore meeting with MAGERT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input authority records</li> <li>Draft SCM instruction sheet and post online</li> <li>Approve headings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise and publish SCM instruction sheet</li> <li>Submit BFM</li> <li>Train LC catalogers</li> <li>Implement</li> </ul>				
<b>Law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine tentative AALL headings on wiki</li> <li>Meet with AALL working group at ALA Midwinter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with working group at AALL meeting</li> <li>Draft SCM instruction sheet and post for comment</li> <li>Accept/input authority records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve headings</li> <li>Revise and publish SCM instruction sheet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit BFM</li> <li>Train LC catalogers</li> <li>Implement</li> </ul>			
<b>Literature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine interested parties (ask SAC subcommittee for assistance at Midwinter)</li> <li>Research the issues (professional literature, interested organizations, universities)</li> <li>Examine other thesauri</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide scope of project</li> <li>Post sample list of headings online</li> <li>Draft SCM instruction sheet and post online</li> <li>Investigate SACO presentation at ALA</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin to create/accept authority records</li> <li>Revise and publish SCM instruction sheet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve records</li> <li>Submit BFM</li> <li>Train catalogers</li> <li>Implement</li> </ul>	
<b>Music</b>	<p><i>Retrospective headings (with MLA)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confer with MLA Bibliographic Control Committee</li> <li>Select project management committee and confirm responsibilities with MLA</li> <li>Revise SCM instruction sheets</li> <li>Develop criteria for MLA volunteers</li> <li>Develop workflow and monitoring procedures for volunteers; train volunteers</li> </ul> <p><i>New headings (with MSR teams)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief and begin training LC MSR teams</li> <li>Decide date for MSR to start inputting records</li> </ul>		<p><i>Retrospective headings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive authority records from MLA</li> </ul> <p><i>New headings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input authority records</li> </ul> <p><i>Retrospective and new headings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve headings</li> <li>Submit BFM and begin global update of bib records in coordination with OCLC</li> </ul>				
<b>Religion</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine interested parties (ATLA?)</li> <li>Research the issues</li> <li>Examine other thesauri</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide project scope</li> <li>Post sample headings</li> <li>Draft and post SCM instruction sheet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accept/create records</li> <li>Revise and publish SCM instruction sheet</li> <li>Approve records</li> <li>Train catalogers</li> <li>Submit BFM</li> <li>Implement</li> </ul>	

