

# **IFLA Survey on Genre Form Practices in National Libraries**

## **Executive Summary**

### **Background and Scope of the Survey**

The IFLA Genre/Form Working Group is a joint working group under the aegis of the Cataloguing Section and the Subject Analysis and Access Section (Formerly known as the Classification and Indexing Section). The working group sent out a survey on genre/form practices in national libraries in February 2017. We received 77 responses (excluding duplicates and fragmentary responses). The survey results are available in the Working Group's web page. Totalling 87 questions, the survey starts with a general section, then directs the user into 1 of 3 different tracks based upon whether libraries are using single, or multiple genre/form vocabularies, or are planning to develop them. A common final section covers other ways of expressing genre/form concepts and final reflections. The issues studied in the survey and their analysis are summarized hereafter.

### **Genre/Form Vocabularies Use and Development**

**Are libraries using or developing G/F vocabularies?** Almost two thirds of libraries answering the survey are already using one or more genre/form vocabularies (50-77), with another 10% developing a genre/form vocabulary (8). About ¼ of respondents (19) are not using or developing a genre/form vocabulary.

**Among libraries using or developing G/F vocabularies, are the vocabularies single or multiple vocabularies?** Slightly over half of the respondents already using genre/form are using a single G/F vocabulary (27-48). Among those developing vocabularies, over 2/3 are developing a single G/F vocabulary (5 out of 7).

**Reasons for using multiple vocabularies:** Libraries that use more than one genre/form vocabulary do so for various reasons. The main reason given is that no one vocabulary is rich enough to cover all kinds of resources in every subject area (about ⅔ of responses). Another important reason given is that the library creates cataloging records in several languages.

**Where G/F vocabularies were developed:** For libraries using only one vocabulary, it is developed mostly in-house (over ⅔). Not surprisingly, for libraries using more than one vocabulary, it tends to be a mix of both, an in-house vocabulary and one or more developed elsewhere (over ¾).

### **Genres and Forms Covered in the Vocabularies**

#### **Libraries using or developing only genre terms, only form terms, or both:**

Nearly all respondents using a single vocabulary (96%, 25-26) include both genre and form terms. Among the libraries developing vocabularies, 8-9 responses stated that they plan to include both genre and form terms. This question was inadvertently omitted for libraries using more than one genre/form vocabulary.

**Distinguishing between genre/form:** Responses were almost equal about whether the vocabularies

distinguish, or plan to distinguish between genre and form (29-55 libraries distinguish between the two).

**Subjects covered:** The main conclusion is that every library aims to cover as many subjects as possible; “General terms” and “Literature” were the the most widely used of the categories.

**Types of materials covered:** Most libraries using or planning to develop a G/F vocabulary cover as many types of materials as possible (47-55). In cases where the G/F vocabulary or vocabularies are used for specific types of materials, books and audiovisual resources have the highest percentages (over 80%), and comics the lowest (about 1/3 of the time).

**Audience/creator characteristics:** Audience/creator characteristics are expressed in almost 2/3 of the responses via terms in one or more genre/form controlled vocabulary, or less commonly through a separate non G-F vocabulary (like Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms, LCDGT ). Eleven (of 47 respondents) don’t express audience/creator characteristics at all.

### **Maintenance, Languages, and Geographical and Chronological Aspects**

**Updating vocabularies:** Libraries that use a single G/F vocabulary are updating more frequently than the ones using multiple vocabularies. Among libraries using 1 vocabulary, the most frequent answer is that updating depends on library needs, but 5 out of 19 respondents claim that they update vocabularies continuously, even daily. On the other hand, most libraries using multiple G/F vocabularies answered that vocabularies are updated irregularly, on an infrequent basis, or (in one case), not at all. Only 2 (out of 20) answered that it depends upon the vocabulary and 3 answered frequently and daily.

**Mono- or multilingual vocabularies:** About 2/3 of the G/F vocabularies used by respondents are in one language (34-47); on the contrary, libraries planning to develop vocabularies are planning to create them in multiple languages, with one of the languages being English.

**Geographical aspects:** Over 2/3 of the respondents already using one or more genre/form vocabularies allow geographical aspects to be expressed with their G/F terms, either with all terms or with a limited number of terms (33-47). The means of expressing geographical is predominantly through facets in libraries with one vocabulary, and through phrase headings in libraries with more than one.

Of libraries planning to develop genre/form vocabularies, 3-7 libraries will allow geographical aspects to be used in all or some cases, but the same number of libraries is undecided.

**Chronological aspects:** Almost 60% (28-46 libraries) of libraries already using one or more G/F vocabularies allow chronological aspects to be expressed with their genre/form, at least to some extent. The libraries developing vocabularies remain predominantly undecided. In Tracks 1B and 2, we also asked whether libraries expressed chronological aspects through subdivisions, individual facets, or phrase headings. In Track 1A, we inadvertently omitted the option: Phrase headings. In summary, over half the libraries in all tracks selected subdivisions as the most common way that they express or will express chronological aspects (20-31), and slightly over 1/3 of the libraries (14-31) use or plan to use selected individual facets. Only 3-17 respondents in Track 1B and 1-7 in Track 2 use or plan to use phrase headings.

**Indexing:** Taking all the libraries as a whole, about half of them have a separate genre/form index or indexes (49%, 22 responses out of 62). Somewhat over one third use a general keyword index to index G/F terms (36%, 16 responses). Roughly half of all libraries index genre/form in a subject index (50%, 24 libraries). (The two questions relating to indexing allowed the respondent to check multiple choices, so the total percentages do not add up to 100%).

### **Availability and Documentation**

**Public availability of vocabularies:** Over 2/3 of libraries using or planning to use one or more genre/form vocabularies have made, or intend to make, their vocabularies available (69%, 36-52).

**Availability of genre/form terms as linked data:** A little over 1/2 of all respondents of any track responded that they are publishing, or are planning to do so in the near future, some or all of their G/F vocabularies as linked data (53% or 28-53).

**Availability of documentation:** Of libraries using or developing one or more genre/form controlled vocabularies, almost 2/3 have full or partial documentation publicly available, or will develop it within a year (62%, 34-55).

### **Policies and Final Thoughts**

**Retrospectively adding G/F to legacy data:** The majority of respondents who already are using and/or developing genre/form vocabularies are not considering the retrospective addition of G/F terms to legacy data (59%, 29-47).

**Other means of expressing G/F:** Over 60% of libraries use other means to express G/F concepts in addition to controlled vocabularies. Genre/form is frequently expressed by coding genre/form terms as subject headings. Over half use coded information, content/media/carrier/, and form/genre subdivisions applied to subject headings. Slightly less than half use conventional collective titles (e.g. "Works"). Two libraries both used classification numbers as a means to express genre/form.

**Benefits and hurdles using G/F vocabulary:** Benefits mostly relate to a richer user experience: enhanced searching and faceting capabilities, improved access, and better identification of materials. The main hurdles referenced are shortage of specialists (lack of trained staff / or lack and cost of proper training), money and time.

## **Introduction**

The IFLA Genre/Form Working Group was formed in January 2014 as a joint working group under the aegis of the Cataloguing Section and the Classification and Indexing Section (now the Subject Analysis and Access Section). Members (as of September 15, 2017) include Ricardo Santos and Ana Stevanovic, co-chairs; Harriet Aagaard, Marie Balikova, Lynne Howarth, Ulrike Junger, Patrick LeBoeuf, Viktoria Lundborg, Rehab Ouf, and George Prager.

The working group's web page is at: <https://www.ifla.org/node/8526>

The group first wanted to create a survey on genre/form practices in national libraries. The survey went through various iterations using several survey software. The definitive version of the survey was created by Ricardo Santos in Survey Gizmo. The questions were developed collaboratively by the working group, with input from members of both standing committees, as well as the American Library Association's Subject Analysis Committee, especially its Subcommittee on Genre/Form. The survey was sent out in early February 2017, and remained open until April 17, 2017. We received 77 responses (excluding duplicates and fragmentary responses). The survey results are available in the Working Group's web page. We have included background information on the survey, and the group's evaluation of the survey results.

### **Goals, what we wanted to find out**

The main questions that the survey determined to answer were the following: Are libraries using one or more controlled vocabularies to express genre/form? If not, do they plan to in the future? What are the chief characteristics of the genre/form vocabulary (mono- or multilingual, use of geographical or chronological aspects, differentiation between genre and form terms, etc.). Are libraries currently expressing G/F concepts through some other means, instead, or in addition to a controlled G/F vocabulary? And finally, what are the main benefits and hurdles to using genre/form terms?

### **Survey structure**

Given the complexity and variety of cases assumed, and that could not be studied using a simple and linear survey structure, we decided to divide the survey into different sections and tracks, based upon whether libraries were already using one or more genre/form vocabularies, or were planning to develop them. The survey was structured as follows:

#### **General questions (Section 1; Q1-5)**

This section was for all libraries to answer. The survey taker was automatically directed to the right section and track, depending upon her/his response to **Question 5: Does your library currently use genre/form terms in its cataloging, or is it planning to use them in the future?** If the library was already using genre/form, the respondent would be directed to Section 2 (Track 1); if the library was planning to develop genre/form, the respondent would be directed to Section 5 (Track 2). All survey participants were finally directed to Sections 6-7 on other ways of expressing genre/form. Whenever possible, parallel questions were asked in each track, in order to draw general and comparable conclusions. For example Questions 22-23, 49-50, and 73-74 all relate to the use of geographical aspects in genre/form terms in the different tracks.

#### **Libraries using G/F in their cataloging (Section 2; Track 1; Q6-7)**

Libraries already using/accepting genre/form in their cataloging were directed to Track 1A (Section 3) or Track 1B (Section 4), depending upon whether they were using just one or multiple genre/form

vocabularies.

**Libraries using one single G/F vocab (Section 3; Track 1A; Q8-32)**

**Libraries using multiple G/F vocabs (Section 4; Track 1B; Q33-59)**

**Libraries that plan to develop one or more G/F vocabularies (Section 5; Track 2; Q60-81)**

**Use of broad subject vocabulary with genre/form instead or in addition to G/F vocabularies (Section 6; Q82-84)**

**Use of uncontrolled vocabulary or other means to express G/F concepts instead of, or in addition to, genre/form terms (Section 7; Q85-86)**

**Final reflections (Section 8; Q87)**

#### **Question types: Free text vs. multiple choice answers**

While most questions were framed as multiple choice, we also asked for free text responses in some cases. For instance, further information was requested for how libraries update their controlled vocabularies (Q18); why libraries use multiple genre/form controlled vocabularies (Q33), and which ones they use (Q34); how libraries distinguish between genre and form terms, if they use both (Q64); more information on how libraries express genre/form (Q84); and main benefits and hurdles of using genre/form (Q87).

#### **Scope of the survey**

We decided to limit the survey only to national libraries, as we thought that national libraries would often be at the forefront of genre/form developments in their countries. Also, that would enable us to analyze trends from a smaller number of libraries, without being overwhelmed by several hundred or thousand survey results. We made some exceptions with libraries acting as national libraries in some domains, or playing an important role in specific communities, as in the case of the National Library of Medicine and the National Agricultural Library in the United States, and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt.

#### **Publicizing the survey**

We enlisted the cooperation of Genevieve Clavel, secretary of IFLA's National Libraries Section, who sent out our cover letter including a link to the survey on the NAT-LIB list on February 1, 2017. After about two weeks, we followed up with individual e-mails to all of the 179 libraries listed on the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CNDL) list that had not yet responded whenever email addresses were available. The list is at: [http://cdnl.info/images/address/2016\\_cdnl\\_address\\_list.pdf](http://cdnl.info/images/address/2016_cdnl_address_list.pdf) Unfortunately, about 48 entries of the 179 entries either did not have email addresses, or the addresses came back as errors. In these cases, we searched for national library contacts on the web. We also asked members from several IFLA standing committees (chiefly Cataloguing, Subject Analysis and Access, National Libraries, Bibliography, Law Libraries, and the Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section) for contacts in non-responding countries. Other useful lists included the EURIG, RDA and PCC lists, African list of national libraries, CORMOSEA (<http://www.cormosea.org/>), and ABINIA (Latin American National Libraries Association). We followed up with a reminder one month later on the NAT-LIB list, as well as multiple individual reminders to all non-responding libraries for which emails were available.

### **Languages of the survey**

We were originally planning to send out only an English language version of the survey, due to the logistical and other challenges of translating and interpreting the survey in multiple languages, and collocating the results. Also, we assumed (whether rightly or wrongly) that most of the librarians from national libraries would be able to understand English well enough to answer the survey (or have a colleague at the library who could help them do so). However, Rehab Ouf, one of our working group members, is fluent in Arabic and English, and volunteered to translate the survey questions into Arabic as well as the responses into English. She also had extensive contacts in most Arabic-speaking countries.

The survey closed on April 17, 2017. We received 66 responses to the English language version of the survey, and 11 to the Arabic language version (77 total responses, excluding duplicate and fragmentary responses). Rehab integrated the Arabic responses into the English language version of the survey, so that we would be able to include all the libraries in a combined set of results.

### **Working group meeting in Madrid**

Four members of the working group: Rehab Ouf, Ana Stevanovic, George Prager, and Ricardo Santos, met on April 20-21, 2017 at the Biblioteca Nacional de Espana, which generously hosted our meeting. Funding for the meeting was provided by IFLA. At the meeting, we evaluated the results of the survey, and worked on a report for the 2017 IFLA Conference. Follow-up work continued after the meeting. Minutes of the meeting are available here: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/classification-and-indexing/iflagenreformwgmadridmeetingminutes20170607.pdf>

## **Analysis of the Survey Results**

### **Number of responses:**

We received 77 total responses, excluding duplicate and fragmentary responses. This represents a response rate of almost 50%, excluding cases where no valid email address could be located. All percentages in the report with the exception of percentages ending in .5% have been rounded off as follows: .1-.4% to the preceding whole integer (e.g., 21.4% to 21%; .6-.9% to the next highest integer (e.g., 21.6% to 22%). Percentages ending in .5 have been left as is.

### **Reasons for non-responses:**

**Language difficulties.** The survey was sent out in English and Arabic; some cataloguing experts might not be comfortable filling out a survey in either of those languages. Lack of response can be also attributed to other reasons (or a combination of them), including: unfamiliarity of cataloging staff with genre/form, Internet connectivity problems or security issues, staff turnover, political situations, etc. In some cases, emails addressed to a director of a library might not make it to the appropriate staff to respond to the survey. Partial and/or contradictory responses were submitted in some cases.

### **Geographical distribution of responding libraries**

We received good response from most European countries, North and South America, but a small number of respondents from Africa (many erroneous or obsolete email addresses) and the former Soviet republics, with big gaps in response from Asian countries. Countries in the Arab region were contacted individually using an Arabic version of the survey and the cover letter sent to a different list of contacts. This was done almost three weeks later, after getting minimal response from the original English survey.

## **Survey Results**

Due to the complexity of the Survey structure, question analysis has been organized in specific manner. The analysis was organized according to three types of questions: general questions, parallel questions, and unique and/or free text questions. General questions were analyzed first (Q1-Q5). Since there were similar questions in the different tracks, they were analyzed in parallel to draw general and comparative conclusions (e.g. Q28 –Q29; Q55-56; Q78-Public availability of vocabulary). These were followed by unique questions in each track, then by the free-text general questions at the end of the survey, about other means of expressing genre/form terms, and finally, benefits and hurdles of using genre/form vocabularies were expressed.

### **Q1-Q2. Names of responding libraries, and contacts at the libraries:**

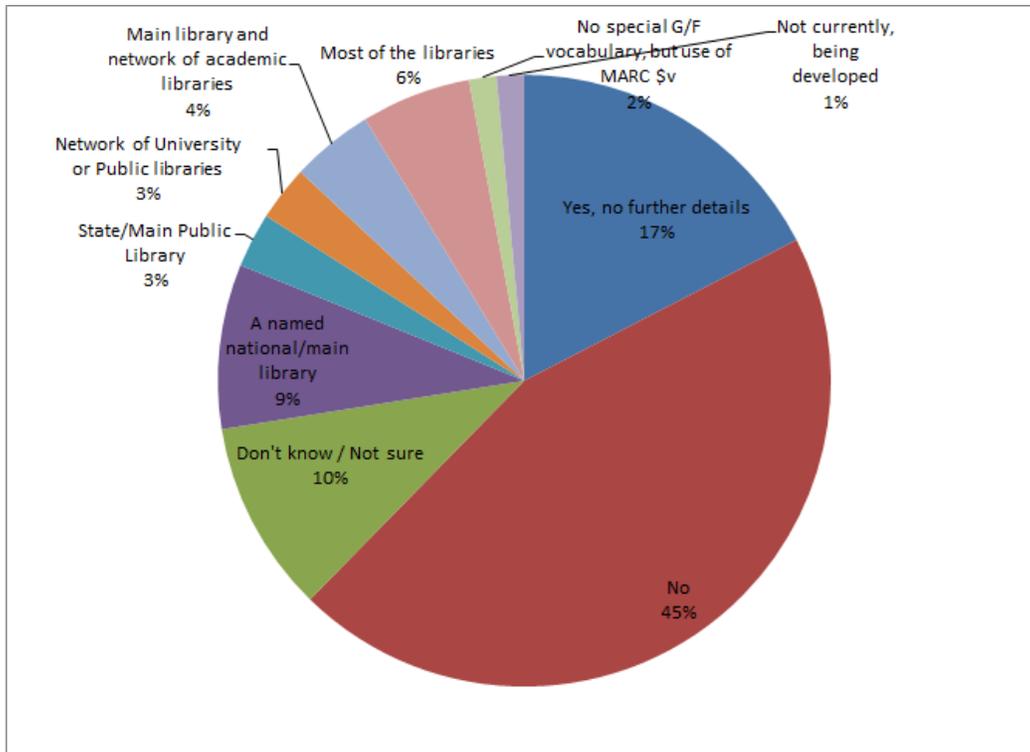
The names of the responding libraries were given in Q1 of the survey, and optional contact information in Q2. For the complete list of libraries, see Appendix I.

### **Q3. Size of library collection:**

There was a very wide range in sizes of the libraries that responded: several respondents worked with collections of over 20,000,000 physical items (one with over 150,000,000 items), to one that had less than 1000 volumes.

### **Q4. Other libraries in the country using and/or developing other genre/form vocabularies:**

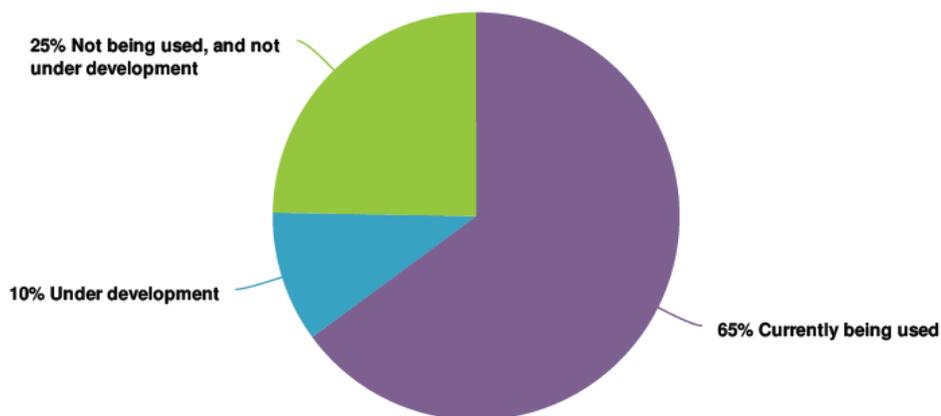
This question was phrased as a free text question. We received 69 responses, one of which gave an ambiguous response. 29-69 libraries answered that at least one other library in their country was using genre/form. Nine respondents answered that multiple libraries in their country were using genre/form. The following chart shows the variety of answers we got for this free-text question, broke down by percentage.



**Other libraries in the same country using or developing G/F vocabularies**

**Q5. Libraries using genre/form or planning to develop it:**

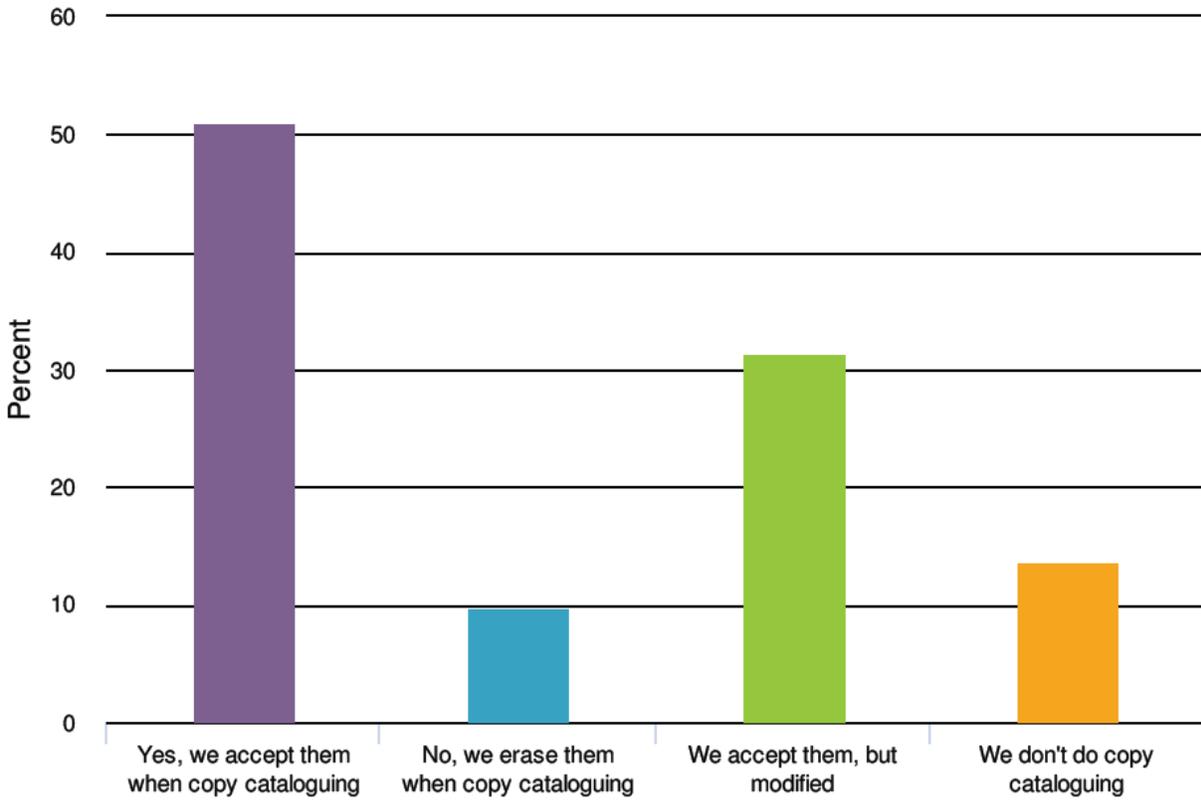
This was the *key question* in the survey. Depending upon how it was answered, the respondent would be automatically directed to the proper track of the survey. Almost  $\frac{2}{3}$  of libraries answering the survey are already using genre/form vocabulary or vocabularies (directed to Track 1 with its two sub-tracks; 1A & 1B), with another 10% developing genre/form vocabulary (directed to Track 2). (50 libraries using it, 8 planning to use it, out of 77 libraries).



**The Use of genre/form terms in cataloguing**

**Q6. Copy cataloging:**

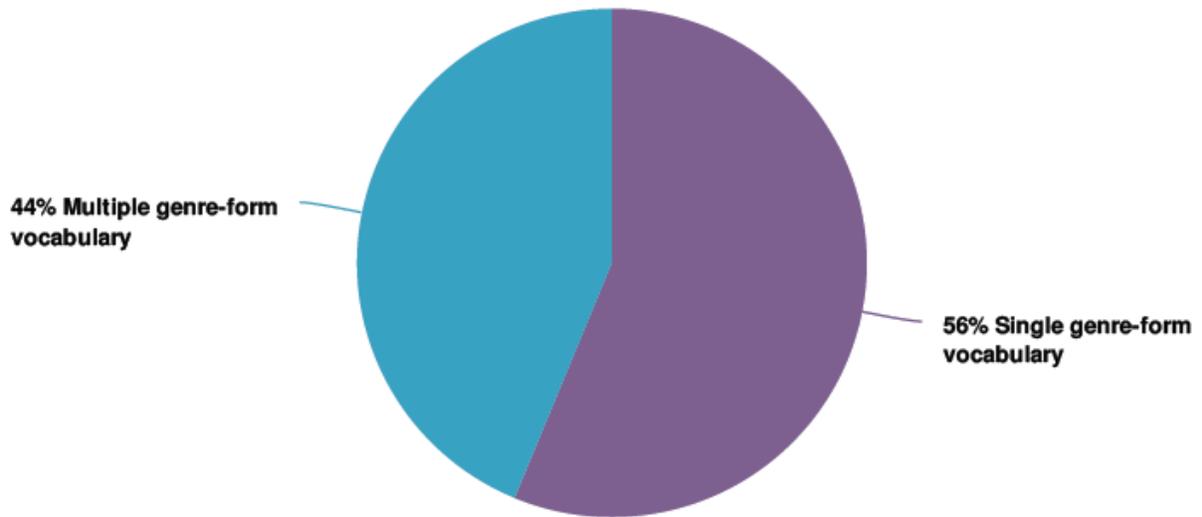
A little over half of the respondents accept genre/form terms in copy cataloging (26-56); and another 17 accept them with modifications, raising the percentage of acceptance of G/F term to about 78%.



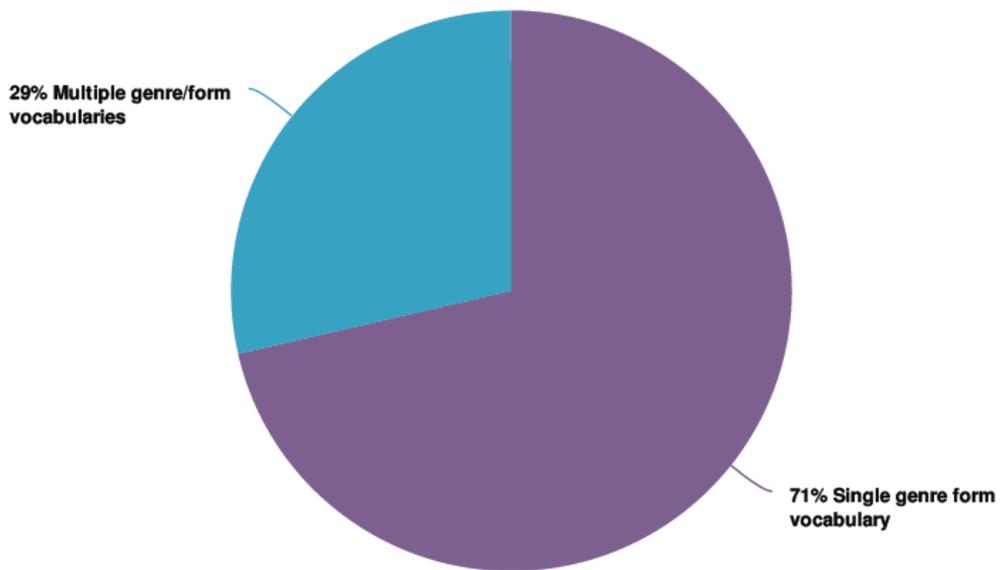
**The Use of genre/form terms in copy cataloging**

**Q7, Q60. Does your library use/develop one or more than one G/F vocabulary?**

Over half of the respondents already using genre/form are using a single G/F vocabulary (27-48). Among those developing vocabularies, 5-7 (71%) are developing a single G/F vocabulary.



**Libraries already using genre/form vocabularies**



**Libraries developing genre/form vocabularies**

**Q8, Q35. Where was the genre/form vocabulary or vocabularies developed, in-house, outside, or a mixture of both?**

For libraries using only one vocabulary, it's developed mostly in-house (18-25).

Value	Percent	Responses
Developed its own	69.2%	18
Developed elsewhere (e.g., TGM, Art & Architecture Thesaurus)	7.7%	2
A mix of both	23.1%	6

**Place of development of single genre/form vocabularies**

For libraries using more than 1 vocabulary, it tends to be a mix of both, an in-house vocabulary and one or more developed elsewhere (76%, 16-21 libraries).

**Q9. If the vocabularies were developed elsewhere, where were they developed?**

There were only 6 responses to this question, 1 of them invalid. 3-5 respondents stated that they use Library of Congress vocabulary, 2 of them exclusively, and one stated that they use it along with the BNF (French) vocabulary.

**Q10, Q62. Libraries using or developing only genre terms, only form terms, or both:**

Nearly all respondents using a single vocabulary (96%, 25-26) include both genre and form terms. Only one library (National Library of Bulgaria) stated that its G/F vocabulary only included form terms. Among the libraries developing vocabularies, 8 out of 9 responses stated that would include both genre and form terms, and one (National Library of Sudan), only genre terms. This question was not asked for libraries using more than one genre/form vocabulary.

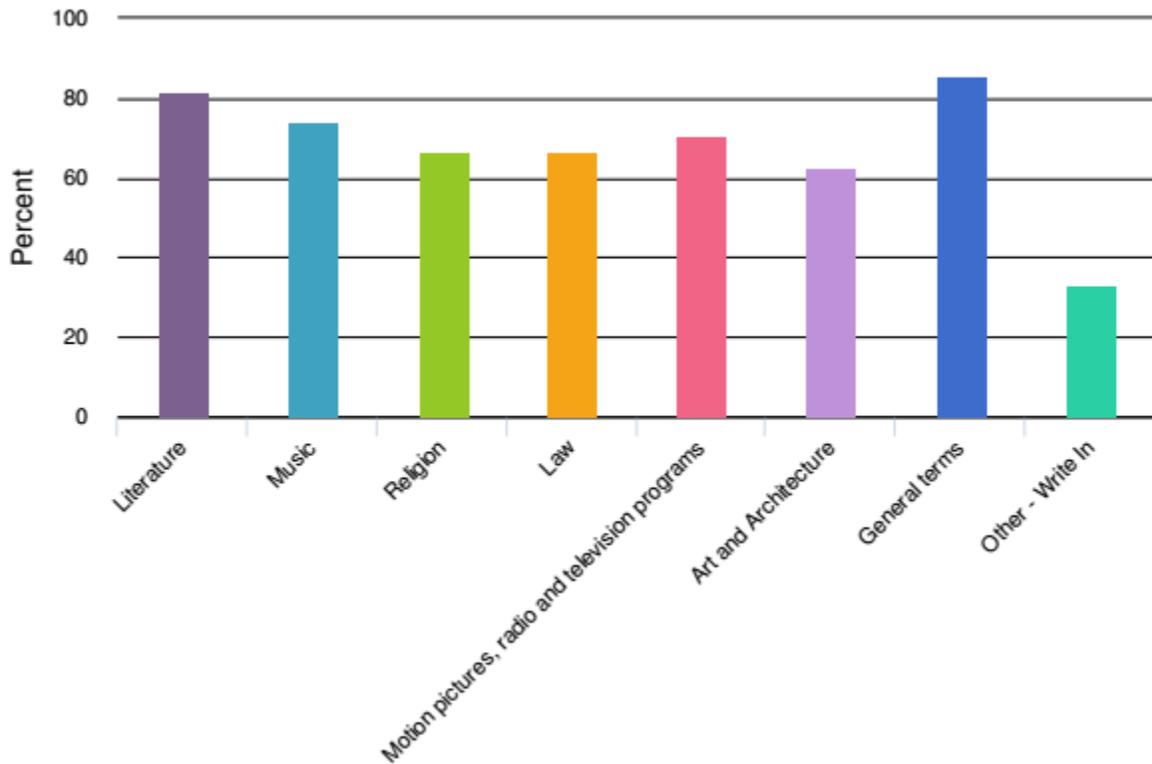
**Q11, Q36, Q63, Q64. Distinguishing between G/F terms:**

Responses were almost equal about whether the vocabularies distinguish, or plan to distinguish between genre and form. 52% or 13-25 libraries using one genre/form vocabulary distinguish; 52.4% or 11-21 libraries using multiple G/F vocabularies distinguish at least in some of their vocabularies between the two; 56% or 5-9 respondents for libraries planning to develop G/F vocabularies; 53% (29-55) of all respondents. This result seems surprising, given the difficulty of distinguishing between genre and form in many/most cases. Question 64 was a free text question, asking how libraries planning to develop a G/F vocabulary will distinguish between the two. This was a unique question for Track 2 (Q64), as corresponding questions were omitted for Tracks 1A and 1B. The previous question (Q63) had five "yes" and four "no", but in Q64 there are only four answers (one is missing). After an analysis of the responses, our conclusion is that different languages have different notions of genre/form concepts. Although they are all trying to follow international standards, perhaps there will be slight differences and distinctions that are unique for each language. An interpretation could be: they are undecided about the technique/method of distinguishing between G/F terms because, the development being underway, they are still studying different scenarios

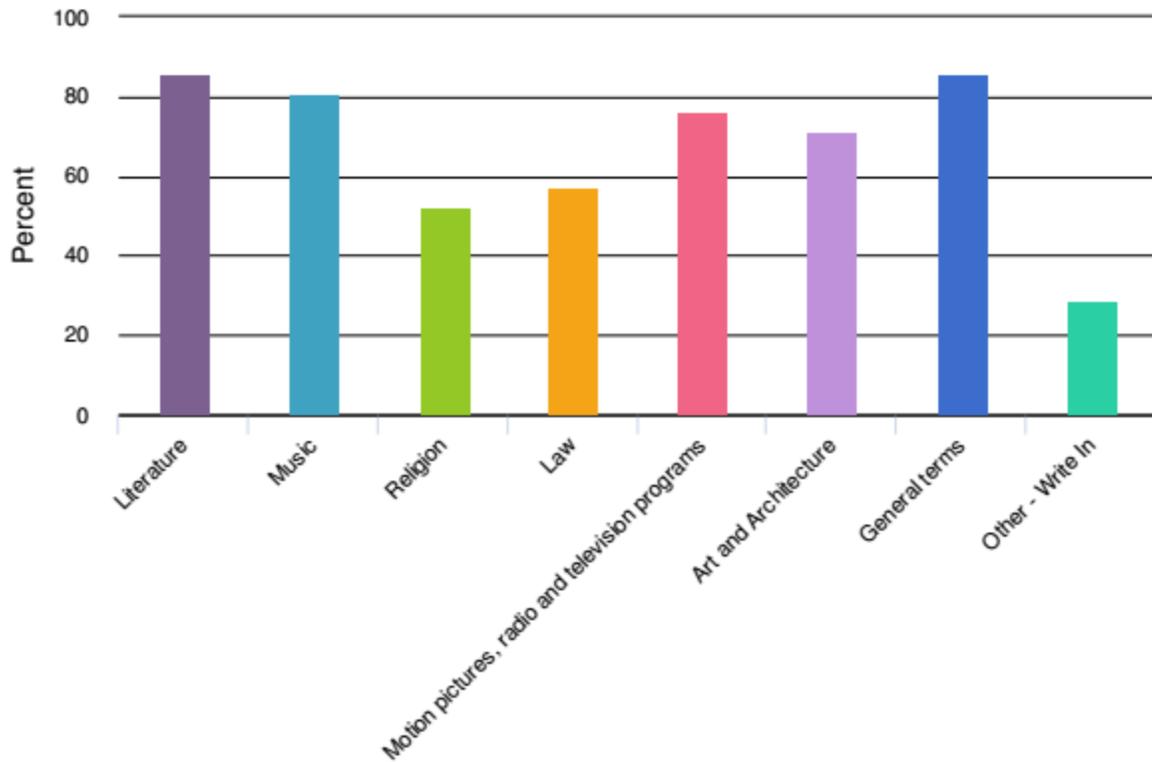
and considering various options.

**Q12-14; Q37-39; Q65-Q66. Subjects covered:**

In tracks 1A and 1B, we asked whether specific subjects were covered. In Track 2, we didn't ask for a breakdown of all the subjects covered. The main conclusion is that every library aims to cover as many subjects as possible; "General terms" and "Literature" were the the most widely used of the categories. Many libraries plan to add more subjects covering other fields.



**Subjects covered in libraries using one G/F vocabulary**

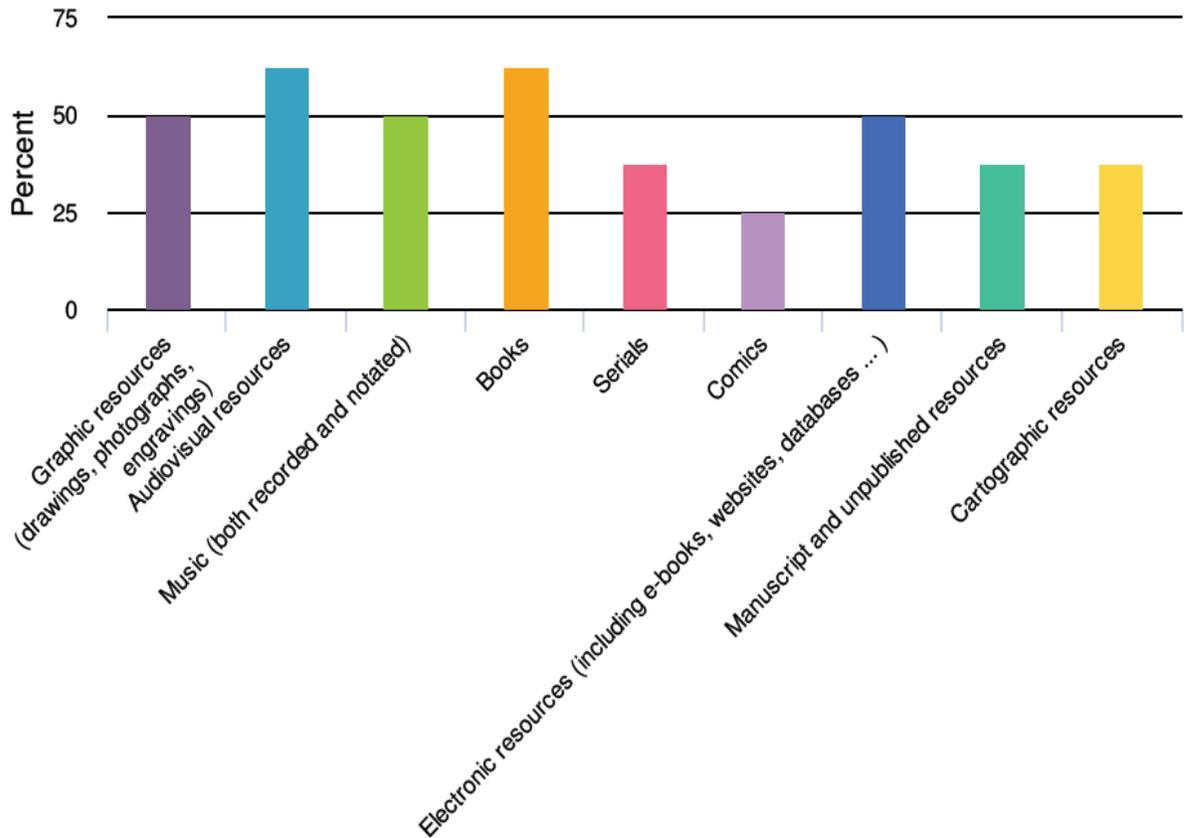


**Subjects covered in libraries using more than one G/F vocabulary**

In “Other” response there are topics such diverse as manuscripts, cartographic, graphic materials, video-games, electronic resources, cookbooks or serials.

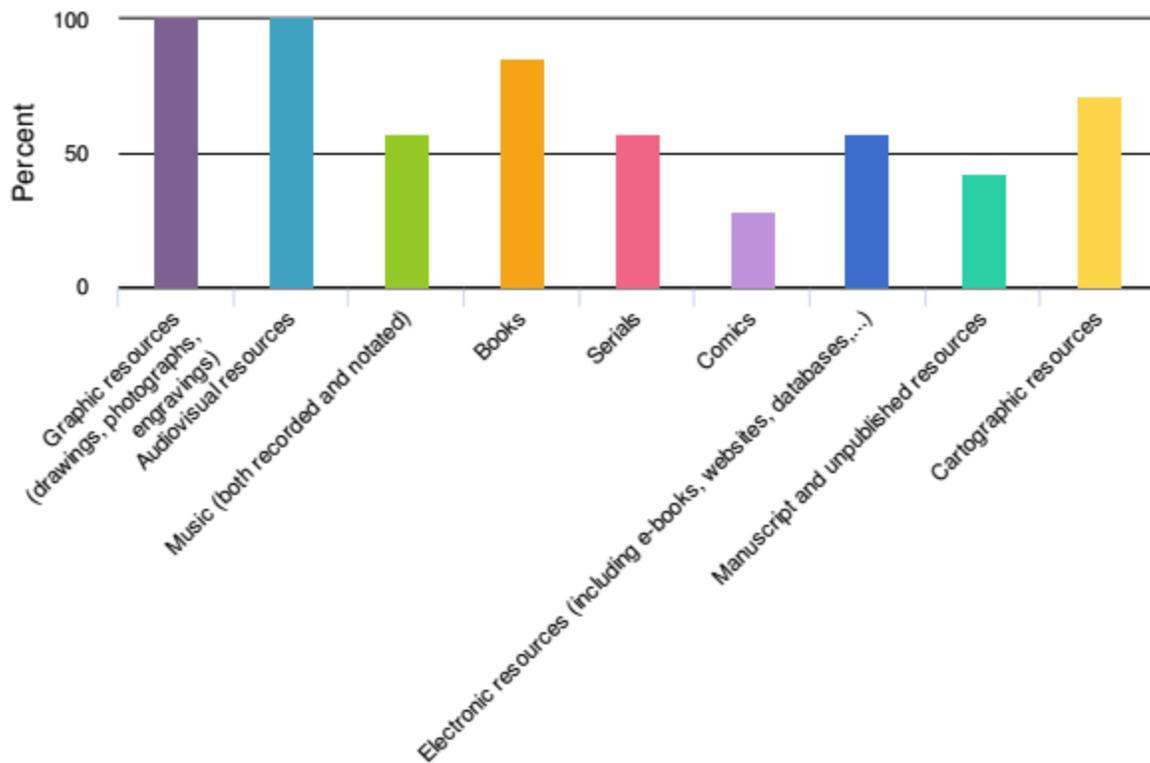
**Q15-16, Q40-41; Q67-68. Controlled vocabulary/ies applicable to all types of materials:**

Over ¾ of libraries using one G/F vocabulary cover as many types of materials as possible (80 %).



**Materials of choice from libraries not applying G/F to all kind of resources for libraries using one G/F vocabulary**

However, in libraries using multiple G/F vocabularies, this percentage is higher (90%). In cases where the G/F vocabulary or vocabularies are used for specific types of materials, books and audiovisual resources have the highest percentages (over 80%), and comics the lowest (about 1/3 of the time).



**Materials of choice from libraries not applying G/F to all kind of resources for libraries using more than one G/F vocabularies**

Libraries at the stage of developing vocabularies are generally planning to include all kinds of resources (7-8 libraries).

**Q17, Q44. Audience and creator characteristics:**

Of libraries using one genre/form vocabulary, a little over 60% express audience and creator characteristics, with slightly over 40% (11-26) expressing them through G/F vocabulary and about 1/5 (5 libraries) through a different vocabulary; a little less than 40%, (10 libraries) do not express these characteristics through genre/form or any other vocabulary.

For libraries using more than one G/F vocabulary, 18-20 express these characteristics in some or all of their vocabularies (2 in all; 16 in some). For all libraries using genre/form, almost 2/3 of respondents (30 of 46) say they express audience or creator characteristics through terms in one or more genre/form controlled vocabularies, while 11 respondents don't express them at all. Six of the respondents express these characteristics through a separate, non-G/F vocabulary (like Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms, LCDGT). This question was inadvertently omitted for libraries developing vocabularies.

**Q18, Q45, Q69. Frequency and manner of updating vocabulary:**

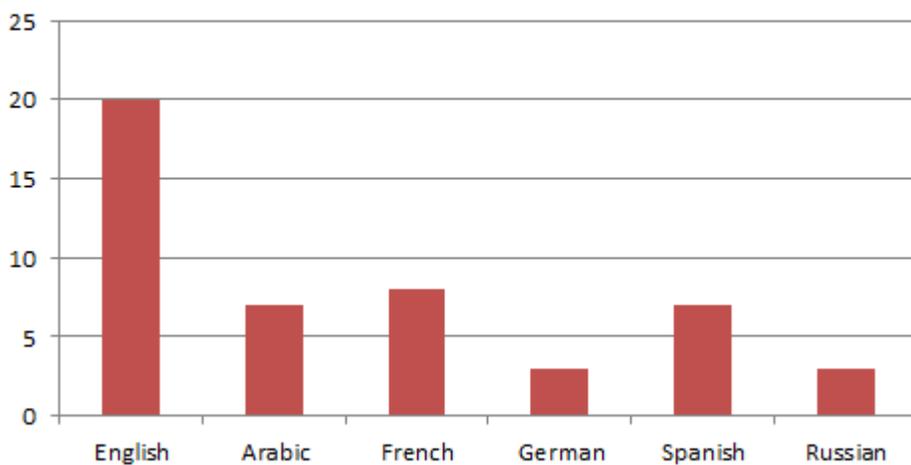
Libraries that use a single G/F vocabulary are updating more frequently than the ones using multiple vocabularies. Although the most frequent answer is that updating depends on library needs, there are 5 (out of 19) respondents who claim that they update vocabularies continuously, even daily. On the other hand, most libraries using multiple G/F vocabularies answered that vocabularies are updated irregularly, on an infrequent basis, or (in one case), not at all. Only 2 (out of 20) answered that it depends upon the vocabulary

and three answered frequently and daily. In Track 1A and 1B there were no specific answers on manner of updating. Only one library using a single G/F vocabulary answered that updates are online, although the conclusion is that staff and working groups are dealing with updates. On the other hand, libraries that are planning to develop vocabularies were more specific about the answers on manner of updating. One of the answers was that vocabulary will be updated automatically (through the system). However, libraries that are planning to develop vocabularies were not precise about the frequency of updating. Most of the answers were that it will depend on their needs.

**Q19-20, Q46-47, Q70-71. Controlled vocabularies in one or multiple languages:**

Most of the G/F vocabularies used by respondents are in one language (61.5 % or 16-26 for libraries using one G/F; 85 %+ or 18-21 libraries for those using multiple G/F vocabularies); on the contrary, libraries planning to develop vocabularies are planning to create them in multiple languages, with one of the languages being English. 75% of the respondents stated that they will develop their vocabulary in multiple languages, suggesting that when libraries intend to develop new vocabularies, they tend to optimize the solutions/tools being developed, be liberated from the current constraints, and develop a more comprehensive, more flexible and extensible tool that the ones currently being used. When looking into the languages being used, there is a large variety of national languages, with 19 different languages in Track 1, with predominance of English, 9 libraries, as being the second language when the vocabulary is in more than one language. In Track 1B, there are 17 national languages and the remark of predominance of English when the vocabulary is in more than one language is still valid. In Track 2, all 6 respondents stated they will add English in addition to their national language if they develop new vocabularies.

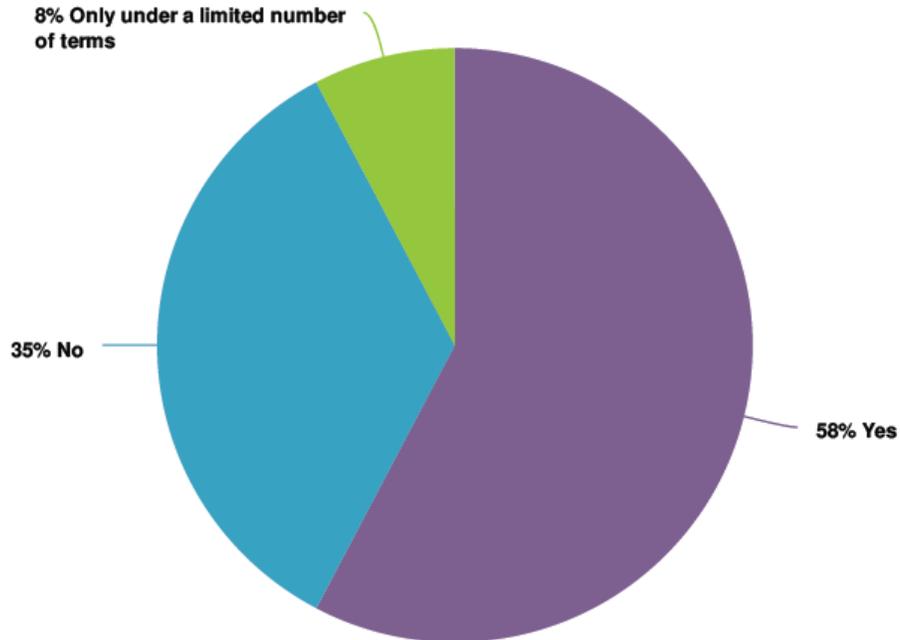
## Languages



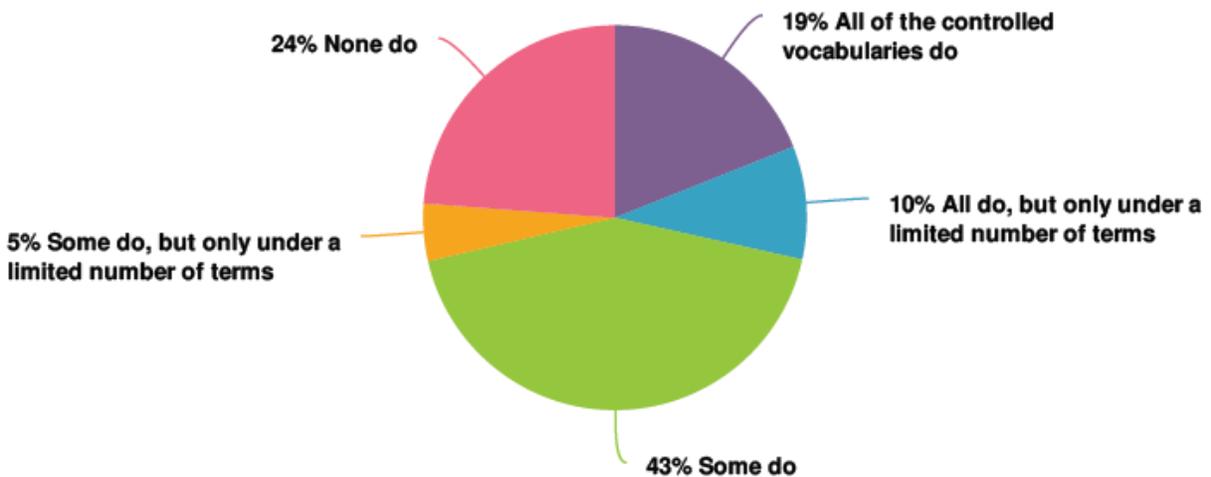
Languages used in all tracks (three or more occurrences)

**Q21-22, Q48-49, Q72-73. Use of geographical aspects with G/F terms:**

A majority of the respondents already using one or more genre/form vocabularies allow geographical aspects to be expressed with their G/F terms, either in every case or with a limited number of terms (70% or 33-47 libraries; 17-26 in Track 1; 16-21 in Track 1B). Of libraries planning to develop genre/form vocabularies, about 43% or 3-7 libraries will allow geographical aspects to be used in all or some cases, but the same number of libraries are undecided.



**Expressing geographical aspects in libraries using one G/F vocab**

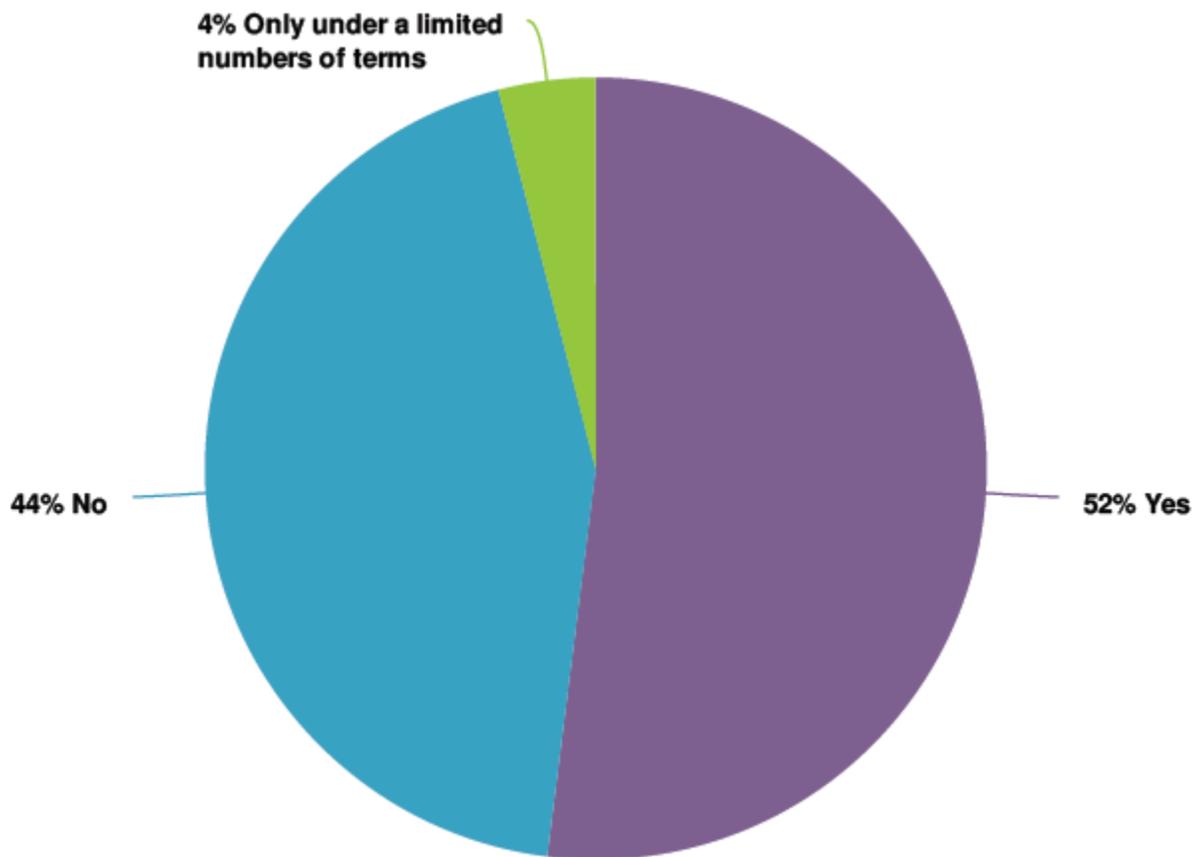


**Expressing geographical aspects in libraries using more than one G/F vocab**

The choices given for expressing geographical aspects were subdivisions, phrase headings or individual facets (this last more likely in libraries using one G/F vocabulary). Individual facets has a lower response in Track 1B than Track 1A (23.5%, 4-22 libraries vs. 53%, 10-19 libraries). We surmise the reason to be that libraries using more than one vocabulary may have special needs for special materials; these specialized vocabularies may have special rules and/or specific constraints associated with the use of geographical aspects.

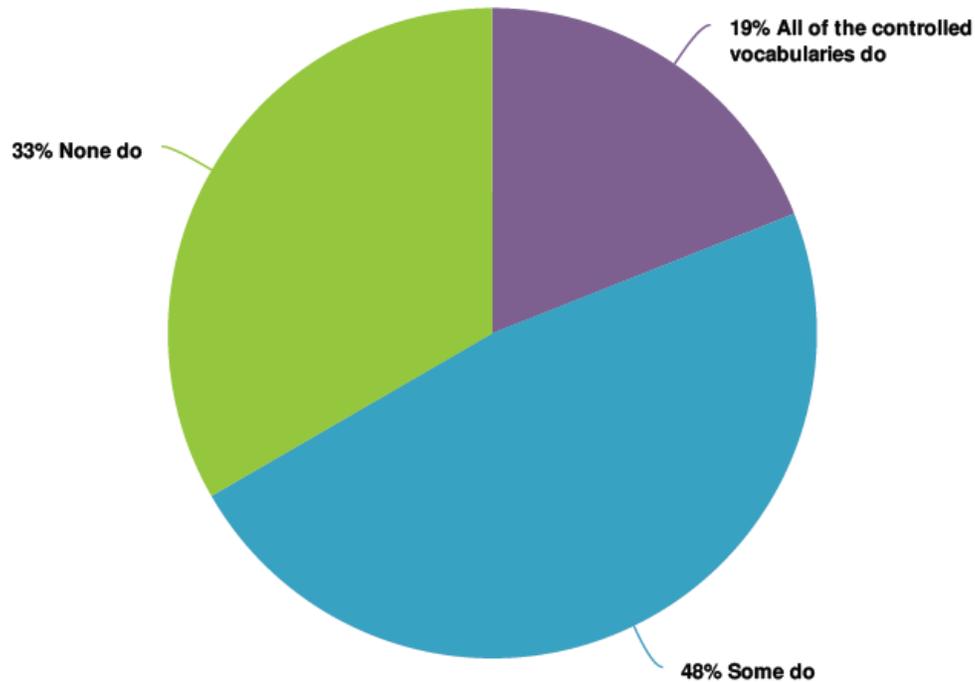
**Q23-24, Q50-51, Q74-75. Use of chronological aspects with G/F terms:**

Libraries using only one G/F vocabulary were about evenly split in allowing chronological aspects (52%, 13-25 allowing them in all cases, and 1 library allowing them in limited cases).



**The Use of chronological aspect for libraries using one genre/form vocabulary**

Of libraries using multiple genre/form vocabularies, only 19%, or 4-21 libraries allowed them in all their vocabularies, but 10-21 allowed them in some of their vocabularies.



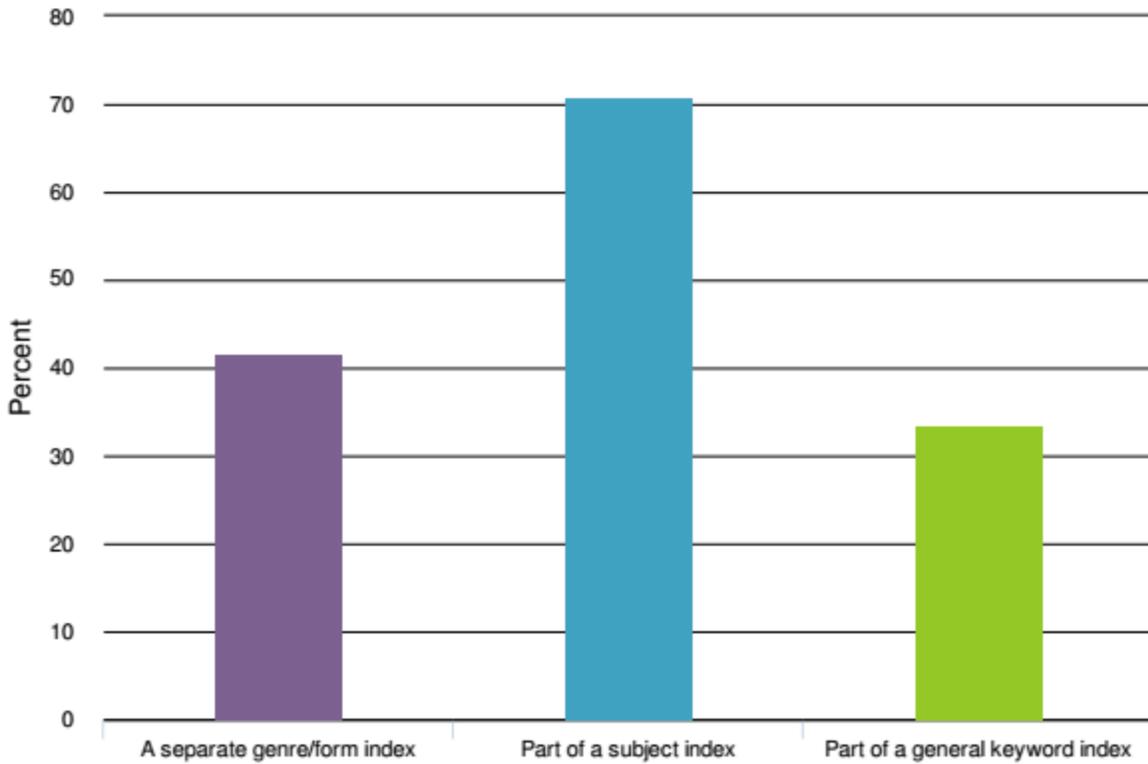
**The Use of chronological aspect for libraries using multiple genre/form vocabularies**

The libraries developing vocabularies remain predominantly undecided (2-7 libraries generally allowing, and 1 allowing in limited cases).

Taking all libraries as a whole, subdivisions are the most common way to express chronological aspects (over 50%, 20-31), while a little over 1/3 of the libraries use or plan to use individual facets (14-31). Only 3-17 respondents in Track 1B and 1-7 in Track 2 use or plan to use phrase headings, while not a single library selected this option in Track 1A, where results were perfectly split between “Individual facets” and “subdivisions” (8 each totaling 16 respondents). Similar to the geographic aspects in the section above, individual chronological facets have a lower response in Track 1B than Track 1A (3-17 libraries vs. 8-17 libraries). We surmise the reason to be that libraries using more than one vocabulary may have special needs for special materials; these specialized vocabularies may have special rules for chronological aspects.

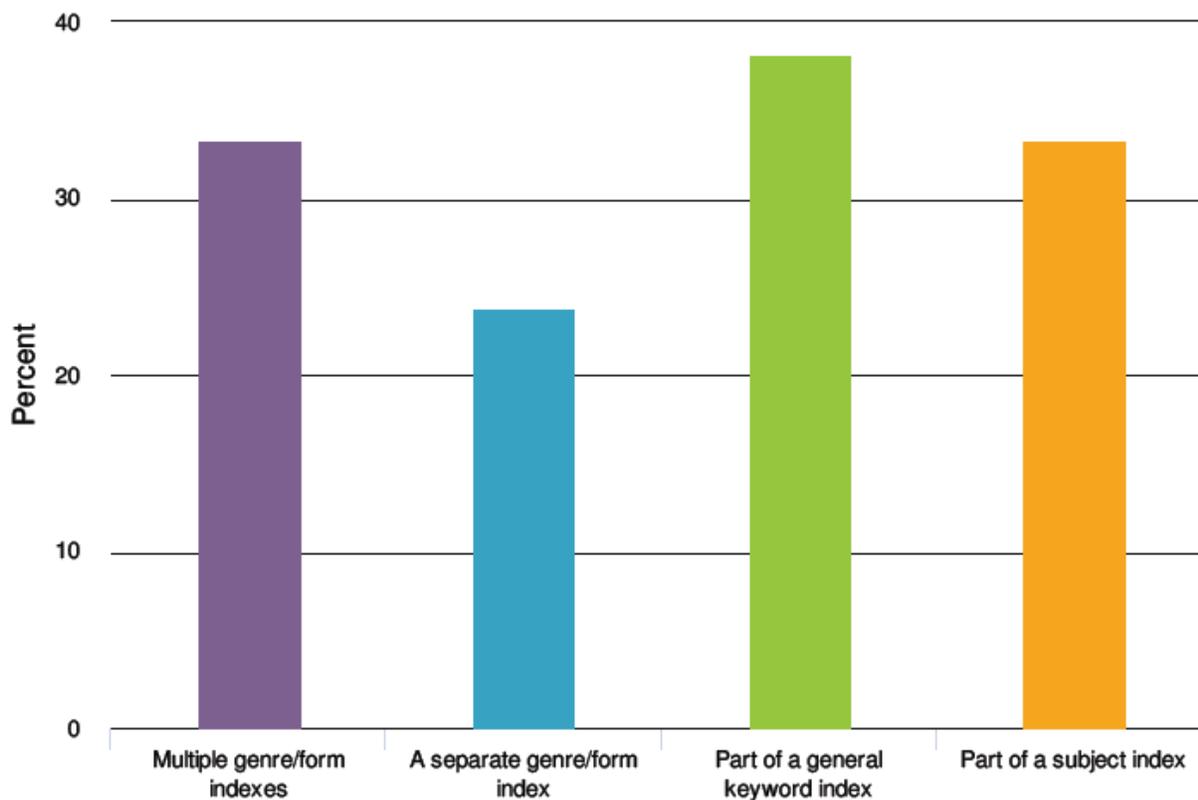
**Q25, Q52. Indexing of G/F terms:**

These two questions allowed the respondents to check multiple choices, so the total percentages do not add up to 100%, since libraries could be using more than one option to index G/F terms. Libraries using a single genre/form vocabulary predominantly indexed the terms in a subject index (71% or 17 responses, out of a total of 35 responses). The second most popular choice was "A separate genre/form index" with 42% (10 respondents), and in the third place a general keyword index (33%, 8 respondents).



**Indexing options for genre/form terms for libraries using one genre/form vocabulary**

Libraries using more than one genre/form vocabulary preferred either a single or multiple genre/form index (57%, or 12 respondents, out of a total of 27 responses).



**Indexing options of genre/form terms for libraries using multiple genre/form vocabularies**

Libraries using multiple thesauri also used a general keyword index to index G/F terms at a rate close to that for single thesaurus libraries: 38% or 8 respondents compared to 33% or 8 respondents for single thesaurus libraries. Taking all the libraries as a whole, almost half of them have a separate genre/form index or indexes (49%, 22 respondents out of 62 responses).

**Q26-Q27, Q53-54, Q76-77. Availability of genre/form terms as linked data:**

A little over 1/2 of all respondents responded that they are publishing some or all of their G/F vocabularies as linked data, or are planning to in the near future (53% or 28-53). The percentages are about the same for libraries in all 3 tracks. In questions 27, 54, and 77, we asked where the linked data would be available. Some libraries gave links to their linked data service. Other libraries just gave the name of the vocabulary with no URL. For libraries that are planning to develop G/F vocabulary, we asked about how they will implement linked data. Only two libraries out of 6 responded, with one stating "through establishing links between terms and countries" and the other "undecided yet."

**Q28 –Q29; Q55-56; Q78. Public availability of vocabulary:**

The majority of libraries using one genre/form vocabulary, or those using multiple genre/form vocabularies, make their vocabularies publicly available, at least in part (17-26 or 65% for libraries using 1 controlled vocabulary; 14-19 or 73% for libraries using multiple vocabularies). For libraries planning to develop one or more vocabularies, 5-7 (71%) plan to make it publicly available. In total, over 2/3 of libraries using or planning to develop one or more genre/form vocabularies intend to make their vocabularies available (69%, 36-52). Questions 29, 56, and 78 asked where the vocabulary was available. In retrospect, these three free-

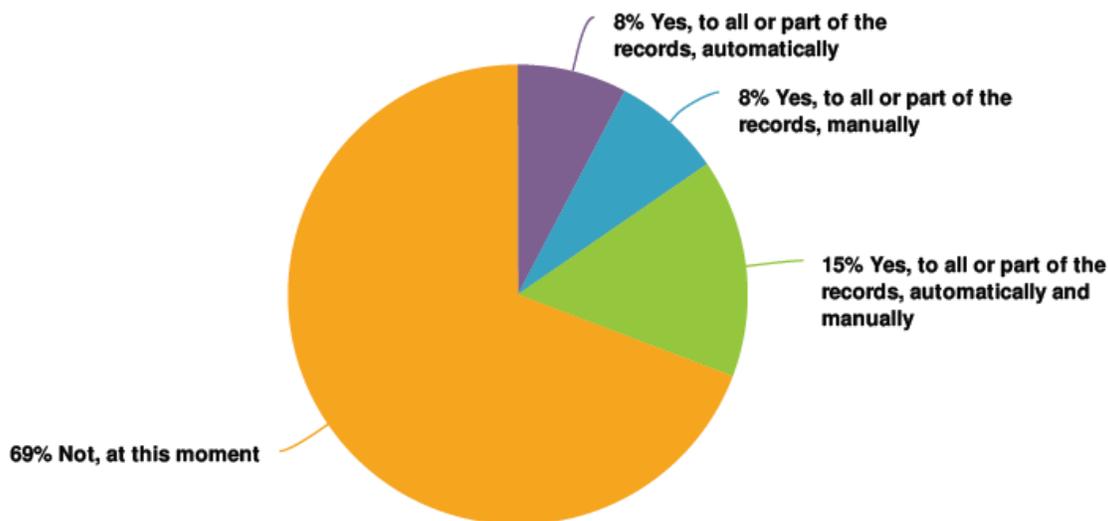
text questions might have been a little unclear. While most libraries give URLs where the vocabularies were available, one simply stated “Available in print and electronically.”

**Q30-31; Q57-58; Q79-80. Public availability of documentation:**

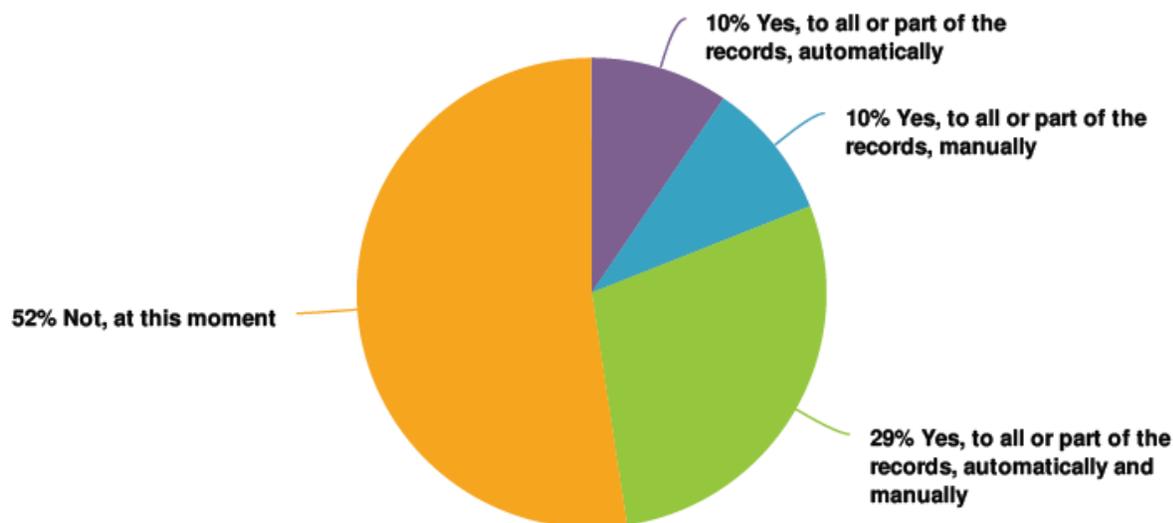
Slightly more than half of the libraries using a single genre/form vocabulary have documentation partially or fully available (54%, 14-26 libraries; split equally between those with full and partial documentation). A little over ¾ of libraries using more than one controlled vocabulary have some or all of their documentation publicly available (76%, 16-21). Half of the eight libraries developing one or more controlled vocabulary plan to have documentation available. In total, of libraries using or planning to develop one or more genre/form controlled vocabularies, almost 2/3 have full or partial documentation available, or will develop it within a year (62%, 34-55). Questions 31, 58, and 80 asked for more information on the documentation, such as frequency of updating, public availability, and the level of development. These questions were rather vague, so some libraries gave URLs, some gave URLs and comments, and others simply gave information on the level of development of their manuals (if any).

**Q32, 59, 81. Retrospectively adding G/F data to legacy data:**

The majority of respondents who are using genre/form vocabularies are not considering adding the terms retrospectively to legacy data (18-26 libraries in Track 1A and 11-21 libraries in Track 1B; total: 29-47, or 59%).



**Retrospectively adding genre/form data for libraries using one genre/form vocabulary**



### **Retrospectively adding genre/form data for libraries using multiple genre/form vocabularies**

For those who are developing vocabularies, the percentage of those not planning retrospective addition of the terms is slightly lower (37.5% or 3-8), with 1 library undecided. Taking all libraries as a whole that are adding G/F terms to legacy data or planning to do so, one half will employ a combination of automated and manual means (11-22). The other libraries are about evenly split between just using manual or just using automated means.

### **Questions only for Track 1B. Libraries that use multiple G/F vocabularies.**

#### **Q33. Reasons for using multiple G/F vocabularies:**

Of the 21 libraries already using multiple genre/form vocabularies (see question 7), 19 responded to this question. (This question did not have a counterpart in Track 2). The main reason given for using more than one thesaurus was that no one thesaurus is rich enough to cover all kinds of resources in every subject area (about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of responses). Another important reason given is that the library creates cataloging records in several languages.

#### **Q34. Which multiple G/F do they use?**

One library uses up to 6 different ones; LCGFT is listed in 10-18 responses.

There are many vocabularies cited throughout the 20 free-text answers (4 of the answers listed only 1 vocabulary). The most commonly cited are LCGFT (Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms, 10), AAT (Art & Architecture Thesaurus, 5) and TGM (Thesaurus for Graphic Materials, 4).

### **Questions only for Track 2: Libraries developing one or more G/F vocabularies**

#### **Q61. Which genre/form vocabulary is the library developing?**

Two libraries responded that they are developing “subject“ or “subject heading lists“ (that will include genre/form terms). Another 5 libraries stated that they are developing their own vocabularies.

## Other Means of Expressing G/F

Sections 6-7 gave all of the respondents the opportunity to comment on other means used to express G/F concepts, regardless of using one, more than one or no G/F vocabularies at all.

### **Q82. Libraries using G/F concept through a broad subject vocabulary instead of, or in addition to, G/F dedicated vocabularies:**

Out of 70 respondents, 41 (or almost 59%) are using broad subject vocabulary with genre/form in it, instead of, or in addition to, genre/form controlled vocabulary.

### **Q83. Using genre/form subdivisions applied to subject headings (as in MARC21 6xx \$v):**

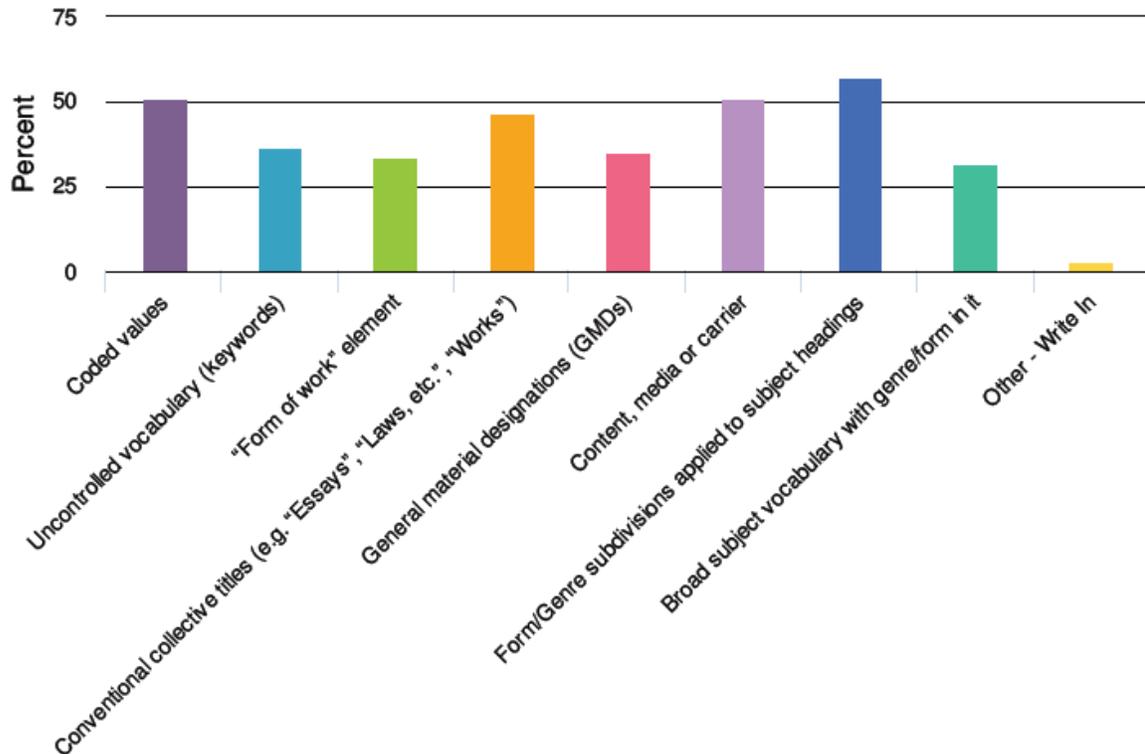
Out of 70 libraries, 42 stated they use this to express G/F concepts (60%), versus 28 (40%) not applying this practice.

### **Q84. Further information on how G/F concepts are expressed (29 responses):**

The free text responses reinforced the data in the prior two questions that genre/form is frequently expressed by *coding genre/form terms as subject headings*, or *using form subdivisions attached to subject headings*. Sometimes genre/form terms have been *translated from LCSH into the national language* of the country. One library used *terms coded as 650 2nd indicator "4" (Subject added entry topical term Source not specified)*. Several use *facets*. One library uses *dc:type* to capture terms from its developed list. One institution uses *genre/form terms in field 655, uncontrolled terms (from copy cataloguing) in 653*.

### **Q85- 86. Other means of expressing G/F:**

Of a total of 67 respondents, 41 (61%), stated that their libraries use other means to express G/F concepts. Eight choices corresponding to different means of including G/F concepts were offered, plus "other", allowing for the selection of multiple options. Over half (56%) use G/F subdivisions applied to subject headings; then come the use of coded information and content/media/carrier/ with an equal percentage of 50%; 46% use conventional collective titles (e.g. "Works"). The 2 "other responses" both used classification numbers as a means to express genre/form.



### Other means of expressing genre/form

### **Benefits and Hurdles of Using G/F Terms**

#### **Q87. Main benefits & hurdles in using G/F terms:**

After analysing 52 answers on this free-text question it seems that there are more benefits than hurdles in using genre/form vocabularies. Benefits mostly refer, *for users*, to: enhanced searching possibilities, more specific and direct access, facilitation of faceted searching, provision of additional access points, better identification of materials, ability to filter searches by a specific genre or form, better and more direct access to materials by genre/form than can be provided by subject headings alone, and generally providing a richer user experience. Apart from the enhanced search options for librarians too, respondents claim that there are some additional benefits for colleagues: cataloguers have more opportunities to display their competence which increases their role; use of genre/form terms offer control and standardization, and allows for more precise description of resources and therefore improves and simplifies the work for librarians. There was only one response that there is little benefit from using G/F terms and vocabularies. Hurdles are mainly referring to a shortage of specialists, money and time. Only a few responses refer to vocabularies, e.g., impossibility for accurate determination of form, G/F terms are already in subject headings or G/F terms get confused with subject headings, LC genres are too specific in some areas whereas in others non-existent or not developed. It can be said that G/F terms are very useful and helpful both to users and librarians and that hurdles are mainly related to external circumstances.

## Conclusion

The use of genre/form terms is a major issue in cataloging. Broadly speaking, genre/form is defined as a means of expressing what an entity is, not what it is about. Understood in such a manner, it is an inevitable part of every library catalog. But, genre and form terms are also part of all vocabularies, whether they are necessary for expressing form or they are used for formation of subject headings about genre. The intention of our survey was to examine and analyze cataloging practices concerning genre/form terms and the use of genre/form vocabularies in national libraries worldwide. We wanted to find out what are the differences and what are the similarities of using these terms and what are the benefits and what are the hurdles. Results shown in this report are based on responses from 77 libraries (most of which were found on the list of 179 libraries provided by the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CNDL)--almost a 50% response rate), so the scope of the conducted survey was wide. It can be said that the majority (76%) of libraries are using or plan to use genre/form vocabularies or vocabularies containing genre/form terms. The conclusion is that there are many more similarities than differences. Many libraries have developed at least one of their own genre/form vocabularies. Sometimes, they look to pre-existing vocabularies which can be adapted and/or translated for use, such as the *Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT)*. There may be a marked preference for using one vocabulary whenever possible. In some cases, libraries use multiple thesauri, including subject specific genre/form vocabularies such as the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*, in an attempt to provide users with optimal access to their resources in specific subject disciplines. Some libraries use or are planning to develop multilingual vocabularies. That is an interesting issue because the genre/form concept is not the same in every language, and that can be the subject of a successor survey. But according to this survey, the intention is to follow international standards and concepts, as the idea of cataloging is universality and generality. Also, when libraries intend to develop new vocabularies, they tend to optimize the solutions/tools being developed, be liberated from the current constraints, and develop a more comprehensive, more flexible and extensible tool than the ones currently being used.

What is the future of genre/form vocabularies? Will their use be increased and enhanced in the coming years to nearly all of the resources catalogued or has it already reached its critical mass point? Are the vocabularies going to be publicly available? Some of the libraries answered that their vocabularies are available online, but that was not uniformly the case. Some of the answers we received were expected, some of them were not. Some of them raised more questions and gave material for further analysis and surveys. Future surveys could focus on a different type of library, such as academic, public, or governmental, or on libraries in a specific region. The survey to national libraries could be sent out again, in multiple languages.

This survey is just one step forward for examining such broad and complex field of cataloging and classification.

## **Acknowledgements:**

We would like to extend our thanks to every library that participated in the survey, or assisted in distributing it. We would also like to thank the members of the IFLA Cataloguing and Subject Analysis and Access Sections, as well as the American Library Association's Subject Analysis Committee—all of whom provided valuable feedback for our survey.

George Prager  
Ricardo Santos  
Rehab Ouf  
Ana Stevanovic

## **Appendix I. List of responding libraries**

Arabic Union Catalog (AUC)

Austrian National Library / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB)

Bangladesh National Library

Bermuda National Library

Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno de la Rca. Argentina

Biblioteca Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña-República Dominicana

Biblioteca Nacional de Angola

Biblioteca Nacional de Chile

Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia

Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba

Biblioteca Nacional del Paraguay

Biblioteca Nacional del Perú

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze (National Central Library of Florence, Italy)

Biblioteca de Catalunya

Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma

Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Egypt)

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec

Bibliothèque nationale de Cote d'Ivoire

Bibliothèque nationale de France

Bibliothèque nationale de Luxembourg

Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library

British Library

Chamber of Deputies Library (Brazil)

Danish Library Center

Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Dubai Public Library

Fundação Biblioteca Nacional (Brazil)

KB, National library of the Netherlands

King Abdul Aziz Public Library (Saudi Arabia)

Library and Archives Canada

Library of Congress

Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

National Library of Myanmar

Nacionalna i univerzitetska biblioteka Bosne i Hercegovine (NUBBiH)

National Agricultural Library (USA)

National Diet Library, JAPAN

National Heritage Library (Belize)

National Library Board Singapore

National Library Of Albania

National Library of Australia

National Library of Estonia

National Library of Greece

National Library of Ireland

National Library of Israel

National Library of Jamaica

National Library of Korea

National Library of Kyrgyz Republic after named A.Osmonova

National Library of Latvia

National Library of Medicine (USA)

National Library of Montenegro "Đurde Crnojević"

National Library of New Zealand

National Library of Norway

National Library of Poland

National Library of Romania

National Library of Russia (St. Petersburg)

National Library of Scotland

National Library of Serbia

National Library of Sudan (NLS)

National Library of Thailand

National Library of Tunisia

National Library of Turkey

National Library of Viet Nam

National Library of the Czech Republic

National and University Library in Zagreb (Croatia)

National and University Library of Iceland

National and University Library, Ljubljana, Slovenia

National Library of Mongolia

National Library of Spain

Qatar National Library

Royal Library of Belgium

SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library (Bulgaria)

Slovak National Library

Swiss National Library

The National Library of China

The National Library of Finland

The National Library of Sweden

University of South Africa Library