Decolonizing your Library: Metadata that empowers

Kelley Flannery Rowan  
*Florida International University*, krowan@fiu.edu

Annia Gonzalez  
*Florida International University*, aalfonso@fiu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/glworks

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

**Recommended Citation**

https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/glworks/114

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the FIU Libraries at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Works of the FIU Libraries by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dcc@fiu.edu.
Decolonizing your library

Metadata that empowers

IATUL 2022  Kelley Rowan, Digital Archives Librarian & Annia Gonzalez, Special Collections Librarian
What is decolonial metadata?

Removal of colonial language that marginalizes ethnicities, genders, and states of being that differ from the historical "default" state of being:

✓ White
✓ able-bodied
✓ Protestant
✓ heterosexual
✓ male
✓ of means
✓ between the ages of 20 and ~50
Inclusive metadata: respect, diversity, & integrity

Terminology replacement and addition

"450,000 illegal aliens work in the city of Miami."

"450,000 non-citizens work in the city of Miami."

"450,000 non-citizens (often referred to as "illegal aliens" before 2015) work in the city of Miami."

*Laudatory language

"Thomas Edison was the remarkable/noteworthy/esteemed inventor of the light bulb."

"Lewis Latimer was the inventor of a long-lasting filament for the light bulb."
Working in a liminal space to implement reparative description

neutrality v. partiality
Thesaurus

- Ableist
- Ageist
- History & Society
- Homophobic
- Laudatory
- Racist
- Sexist
- Religious discrimination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Fix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jap</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Japanese or Asian American or Japanese American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>May refer to Japanese, Phillipino, Vietnamese, or Korean peoples, use Asian or Asian American as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oriental</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>Replace with Asian or Asian American as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>gusano</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Replace with Cuban - coined by Fidel Castro referring to Cubans leaving on the Freedom Flights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>wog</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Racial slur referring to Southern/Mediterranean Europeans, mainly in Australia. Remove.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>Always use the tribe if known; In the U.S., American Indian (preferred) or Indigenous American; In Canada, First Nations (excludes inuit or metis) or First Peoples (includes First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, Aborigines, Maori); Indigenous Peoples (the “s” in Peoples is important) can be used in worldwide reference to original inhabitants of lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Eskimo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Replace with Inuit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An unidentified man rides in a carriage drawn by a black horse in front of a large house.

Coachman?

ERASURE

http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/MM00012668/00001
An all woman band. The identified members are Ida Barron and Dolice Curry. From the Ida Woodward Barron Collection.

INCOMPLETE

http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/MM00008563/00001
Two Seminoles carrying alligator at Musa Isle. Left, Henry (Cowboy) Billie. Right, Tony Tommie. February 15, 1927. no. 126-30

http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/doPurlService/purl/CM00300002/00001
Reparative Metadata at FIU

- Resources
- Collection scan
- Thesaurus creation
- Meet with partners
- Create working groups
Harmful language statement

• Inform the user that they may encounter offensive or harmful language.
• Let users know that the views expressed within the harmful content does not reflect the view of the institution.
• Offer a reason for why the harmful language exists.
• Distinguish between historical content and FIU staff created descriptions.
• Work towards creating respectful and inclusive description is ongoing.
• Provide a way to report harmful language.
Creating Finding Aids: an Opportunity to Decolonize the Archives

Challenges
• Access barriers – power structure, funding, description, language
• Subject knowledge – description
• Ownership
  • physical
  • Intellectual

Solutions
• Increase points of access
• Engage community
• Postcolonial stewardship
• Administrative support
• Local controlled vocabulary
• Reparative metadata
• Disrupt
Finding Aid: Julián Peláez del Pozo Papers

Julián Peláez del Pozo Papers, SPC8070. Florida International University. [https://archives.fiu.edu/repositories/2/resources/102](https://archives.fiu.edu/repositories/2/resources/102)

The collection contains personal and professional documents related to Julián Peláez del Pozo, a Spanish Magistrate who was assigned to the Overseas Courts in Cuba and Puerto Rico during the 19th century. The collection compiles personal and professional documents of Julián Peláez del Pozo. It also holds a variety of documents related to different aspects of the court system applied by Spain in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

FIU Special Collections - collecting mission (genealogy, Cuban law)
- Making a case
- Staffing skills
- Increased knowledge of projects
- Donor could contribute information
New vision/New approach

New information/knowledge disrupted archival process

- Cannot fail to see
- Accountability
- Not contradictory to archival practice
- Engage community to enhance
- Continue to seek educational opportunities
- Training students, interns, and volunteers
- Review and revise procedures, guidelines and local vocabulary
- Share transformative experiences with colleagues and scholars
Examining the Collections
Other examples

Abril Lamarque Collection

• Created a statement specific to the collection to address harmful language used

Written on verso: Pascual Lozada es el lisiado que aparece en carrito, rodeado de sus familiares. El terremoto le echó encima una pared que se derrumbó en su residencia de la calle D numero 13 en Sueño, escapando milagrosamente con vida. Sufrió una herida en el cuello.

Please note: Transcriptions of handwritten notes on photographs in the collection and their English translations have been provided for context. This text may reflect biases and prejudices or terms that are outdated, offensive or insensitive.
Julián Peláez del Pozo Papers

Item Identifier: SPC8070

Florida International University | Julián Peláez del Pozo Papers

Collection Overview Collection Organization Container Inventory

Scope and Contents

La colección contiene documentos personales y profesionales relacionados a Julián Peláez del Pozo, Magistrado español que sirvió en los tribunales de Ultramar en Cuba y Puerto Rico durante el siglo XIX. La colección recopila documentos personales y académicos de Julián Peláez del Pozo entre los que se encuentran su certificado de bautismo, diplomas y certificados de estudios realizados en la Universidad de Madrid. La colección también contiene una variedad de documentos relacionados con su carrera profesional y diferentes aspectos del sistema de tribunales de Justicia aplicados por España en Cuba y Puerto Rico.

The collection contains personal and professional documents related to Julián Peláez del Pozo, a Spanish Magistrate who was assigned to the Overseas Courts in Cuba and Puerto Rico during the 19th century. The collection compiles personal and academic documents of Julián Peláez del Pozo, among which are his baptismal certificate, diplomas and certificates of studies carried out at the University of Madrid. The collection also contains a variety of documents related to his professional career and different aspects of the court system applied by Spain in Cuba and Puerto Rico.
Abril Lamarque Collection

Collection Identifier: SPC6045

Florida International University | Abril Lamarque Collection

Collection Overview | Collection Organization | Container Inventory

Finding Aid & Administrative Information

Title: Abril Lamarque Collection
Status: Completed
Author: Anna Gonzalez and Stephanie Gambill
Date: 2006
Description rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard
Language of description: English
Script of description: Code for undetermined script
Language of description note: English

Revision Statements
- 2021: Updates focused on improving description of disabled people.
Contact us!

Kelley Rowan, Digital Archives Librarian
Krowan@fiu.edu

Annia Gonzalez, Special Collections Librarians
Aalfonso@fiu.edu