Knowledge Organization and Nations

Call for papers - Special Issue of Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science (CJLIS)

How do you know if a country is real? Izzard (1998) famously paraphrased the British Empire’s test as, “Do you have a flag?” but we may as well ask, “Do you have a classification?” National library systems, the management of educational standards, and the need to articulate a nation’s vision of society through shared heritage all play a role in the proliferation of knowledge organization systems alongside changes in borders and governance.

Historical work on knowledge organization systems has shaped our understanding of how standardized documentation and classification systems are entangled with the establishment of national consciousness (Anderson 1991; Adler, 2020; Carra, 2021; Higgins, 2012). Further, studies of Indigenous knowledge organization schemes reveal the reciprocal influence between systems and sovereign worldviews (Bardenheier et al., 2015; Cherry & Mukunda, 2015; Duarte & Belarde-Lewis, 2015). While methods of studying these systems differ, they share an understanding of the interplay between the imagined nation and its conceptual information infrastructure. This special issue will bring together scholars who examine the standards and classifications that set borders and (re)build nations. How and when did these normalized systems arise, and how did they lend to the formation of national boundaries today?

Topic scope

As managing borders and creating informational boundaries are structuring and world-building activities (Anderson, 2016); we are seeking a range of perspectives that illuminate case studies from different historical periods and parts of the world. We welcome submissions from students, practitioners, and researchers of all stages working on:

- Histories of the development of national or anti-colonial knowledge organization systems
- Close readings of knowledge organization systems against state politics
- Comparative studies of knowledge organization across borders
- Land-based classification practices, including border control and establishing claims to land

Submissions

We welcome full length research articles (5,000-8000 words); and Book Reviews (1,000-2,000 words) in line with CJILS accepted submissions.
Please submit manuscripts through the submissions portal (OJS) of the Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science (CJILS) and select “Special Issue - Knowledge organization and nations” from the section drop-down. The submission should include:

- The anonymized manuscript.
- A brief cover letter describing your work and its fit to the scope of this call for papers
- A separate contact information sheet with the names, email addresses, affiliations, and ORCID ID (if available) of all authors of the manuscripts.
- Optionally: Please consider including suggested reviewers for your manuscript and include their email addresses.

For questions about the submission process, please contact us at hannah.turner@ubc.ca and julia.bullard@ubc.ca.

Key dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manuscript submission deadline</td>
<td>Monday February 26th 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer reviews returned</td>
<td>May 2024</td>
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<td>Revised manuscript due</td>
<td>July 2024</td>
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<td>Issue publication</td>
<td>December 2024</td>
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Editors

Julia Bullard is an Assistant Professor at the UBC School of Information where she examines how communities instantiate their values in infrastructure, particularly through the design of knowledge organization systems. Her current work focuses on how catalogues can more fully represent LGBT2QIA+ identities (Bullard et al. 2020) and how colonial subject description represents Indigenous topics (Bullard, Watson, & Purdome 2022).

Hannah Turner is an Assistant Professor at the UBC School of Information. She researches the historical classification and categorization of material culture. Currently, she is investigating histories of museum classification and documentation in Canadian museums. She is particularly interested in how tools and technologies of data collection can reinforce legacies of colonialism, and is curious about institutional and community-driven projects for return and repair.

References


