

# “Our Metadata, Ourselves”: The Trans Metadata Collective

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents the history, internal processes, and finalized report of the Trans Metadata Collective (TMDC), founded to address the lack of attention paid to trans and gender diverse issues in galleries, archives, libraries, museums, and special collections (GLAMS). The TMDC, an ad-hoc group of nearly a hundred information professionals, developed best practices for the description and classification of trans and gender diverse information resources. These guidelines prioritize transparency, cultural sensitivity, correct identification, explicit descriptions of transphobia, and regular assessment of trans-related content. It examines the effects of commonly used standards and controlled vocabularies such as Resource Description and Access (RDA) and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) on trans and gender diverse people and critiques the inadequacy of these standards' representation of those communities. The TMDC provides guidance for using existing LCSHs, recommends alternative subject vocabularies, and proposes revisions to improve representation. The paper advocates individual agency in naming and gender identification, with recommendations on contacting creators and documenting their preferences. The TMDC emphasizes the importance of minimizing potential harm and protecting privacy in metadata creation. Overall, the report aims to enhance the representation and inclusion of trans and gender diverse communities in GLAMS institutions.

## KEYWORDS

Knowledge Organization, Cataloging and Classification, Remediative Cataloging, Reparative Description, Metadata, Information Ethics/Information Privacy

## INTRODUCTION

Trans and gender diverse people (here used as an umbrella phrase for people who identify as transgender, transsexual, nonbinary, genderfluid, and/or have non-Western gender identities) face unique challenges and dangers in information contexts. As a group, they often do not receive the same legal protections against discrimination as cisgender people and they are subject to significant risk of harassment, discrimination, and even violence. Within academic, informational, and professional contexts, many experience a form of personal trauma connected to their pre-transition identities that makes them especially vulnerable (Tanenbaum et al., 2021). Trans and gender diverse people can also be misnamed or misgendered in metadata, which runs the risk of outing them and putting them at risk of harm or violence. For example, Resource Description and Access (RDA)'s requirement for recording creator gender (Billey, 2019, 2022; Billey et al., 2014, 2016; Billey & Drabinski, 2019) and the Getty Vocabularies' collection of gender information for artist records (Harpring, 2023) represent two of many methods by which sensitive information about trans and gender diverse people can be improperly shared.

While there are many publications in Library and Information Science concerning issues faced by trans and gender diverse patrons, staff, and users of Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums, and Special Collections (GLAMS) (D.C. et al., 2017; Jennings, 2017; Lyttan & Laloo, 2020; Naidoo, 2018; Smith-Borne, 2019; Taylor, 2002; Wilson, 2018), little attention has been paid to issues faced in the description, cataloging, and classification of information resources related to these individuals, communities and/or their works, and even fewer have consulted members of those communities. The harm caused by information systems can be especially pernicious in cultural heritage institutions, where metadata records may persist for decades and be aggregated across multiple platforms. As metadata is often created about trans and gender diverse communities by professionals unfamiliar with these issues, work practices that appear to be neutral continue to enact harm. In order to counteract these problems, metadata best practices should be developed by those who will be affected by them, as seen in efforts like the Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia, Protocols for Native American Archival Materials and the Chicano Studies Collection Thesaurus (Antracoli et al., 2019; Antracoli & Rawdon, 2019; CARFAC, 2021; Castillo-Speed, 1992; First Archivists Circle, 2007). To meet these challenges, the Trans Metadata Collective (TMDC) was created in 2021, with the goal of developing a series of best practices that addressed the sizable gap in information resources for trans and gender diverse materials and the communities that data is derived from. The group was formed organically over virtual, informal communication channels, eventually comprising over one hundred cataloguers, librarians, archivists, scholars, and information professionals. The variety of individuals served as a way to ensure the best practices could be instrumental for various kinds of cultural heritage institutions. This long paper discusses the

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history and processes of the TMDC and its finalized report, “Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender-Diverse Resources” (The Trans Metadata Collective et al., 2022).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Critical Cataloging

According to Watson (2023), summarizing nearly a century of literature, critical cataloging refers to practices “deeply rooted in the history of technical work in cultural heritage institutions, librarianship, archivy, and museology—whether those practices are called alternative, radical, reformative, or critical.” (Watson, 2023) Critical cataloging literature recommends:

1. the use of multiple or alternative vocabularies or classifications, where available
2. the practice of “cultural competency” when considering historic identities, items, or groups or the use of “ethical outreach” when dealing with still-living identities, items, or groups
3. “trickster” practices of “alteration,” “subversion,” or “extension” of dominant metadata principles or systems, and/or the replacement of dominant classification or cataloging on a local level
4. consultation with described subjects
5. and finally: the realization that changing words and hierarchies alone will not fix the problems or harms caused by description, cataloging, or classification (Watson, 2021).

Discussions around and about the ethical labeling of marginalized subjects in knowledge organization systems (KOS) are nearly a century old, since the publication of Dorothy Porter’s 1933 review of Oberlin’s Anti-Slavery Propaganda catalog (Porter, 1933) and the development of her Moorland-Spingarn Research Center classification system (Bledsoe, 2018; Helton, 2019; Nunes, 2018). Other approaches, like Sanford Berman’s “Prejudices and Antipathies” (Berman, 1993), Brian Deer’s classification system (Bosum & Dunne, 2017; Cherry & Mukunda, 2015; MacDonell et al., 2003; Swanson, 2015), and formation and work of the GLBT Round Table within ALA (Adler, 2012; Poole, 2020) demonstrate the wide variety of initiatives and individuals engaged in the representation of marginalized identities in LIS. They have also laid the groundwork for the breadth and depth of research and development of actionable tools used by information/cultural heritage professionals today. These items range from thesauri and terminology lists to broad policy recommendations (for comprehensive lists of current efforts, see Watson, 2023 at [critcat.org](http://critcat.org), and Fox, 2023, at [cataloginglab.org](http://cataloginglab.org)). Two of these resources, Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia (A4BLiP)’s “Anti-Racist Description Resources” (Antracoli et al., 2019) and the “Cataloging Code of Ethics” (Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee, 2021) take the approach of creating broad guidelines that can be applied to various institutional contexts—for this reason, they were utilized as the main foundational documents for the subject of this paper, the “Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources.” As GLAMS grapple with realizing that “documentation media are not neutral forms,” and that their legacy data has “data legacies” (Turner, 2020) that continue to affect, effect, and ‘haunt’ present day practices, many have promised or undertaken reparative (re)description work.

### Concerns about trans and gender diverse metadata in GLAMS

While there are many publications in Library and Information Science concerning issues faced by trans and gender diverse patrons, staff, and users of Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums, and Special Collections (GLAMS) (D.C. et al., 2017; Jennings, 2017; Lyttan & Laloo, 2020; Naidoo, 2018; Smith-Borne, 2019; Taylor, 2002; Wilson, 2018), very little of it is aimed at and addresses the concerns of metadata workers at GLAMS. Scholars such as Adler (2012, 2015), Poole (2020), and others (Floegel et al., 2021) have demonstrated, queerness and queer bodies (including trans and gender diverse ones) destabilized the rules and historical understandings between catalogers and the catalogued. Resultingly, information professionals, activists and researchers have struggled with controlled vocabularies, especially ones as pervasive as the internationally-used Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). While terms from controlled vocabularies broadly and LCSH specifically contain terms describing marginalized groups that are often criticized as inappropriate, misleading, or outrightly offensive (Adler & Tennis, 2013; Berman, 1993; Drabinski, 2013; Long et al., 2017; Olson, 2002; Satija & Martinez-Avila, 2017) researchers have pointed out that despite its flaws, LCSH may remain essential for users and researchers (Gross et al., 2015).

The use of authorial or creator names in metadata records is one of the fundamental principles of library and information science. Traditionally, metadata workers within GLAMS have been instructed by LIS research to include all iterations of author’s name, and authors have been directed to self-cite earlier publications. For example, Melvil Dewey spent more time and ink on the proper naming of authors in the first edition of “Classification and Subject Index for Cataloguing and Arranging the Books and Pamphlets of a Library” (Dewey, 1876) than on the subject cataloging of resources. For institutions that use MARC, creator names take precedence as the first field (1XX), and for institutions using RDA will find that a significant portion of RDA’s instructions “RDA: Resource Description and Access” (Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA et al., 2015, Chapters 9–11) is dedicated to explaining the use of names (chapters 9-11). Finally, the two major cataloging and classification

textbooks by Joudrey et. al. (2015) and Chan and Salaba (2016) each dedicate nearly a hundred pages to the processes around naming. In recent years, a number of authors—including academics, activists, and classically trained catalogers—have raised concerns around the use of names as identifiers and access points (Seeman, 2012; Shiraishi, 2019; Whittaker, 2019). Identified issues include: include the use of women’s family or married names (Kazmer, 2019; Martin, 2019), the use of colonial and anthropological nomenclature (Elzi & Crowe, 2019; Fernandez, 2018; Gilman, 2006; Kam, 1992; Rigby & Gallant, 2019), misspelled or miscopied non-Western names (including improper use of Indigenous names) (Arastoopoor & Ahmadasab, 2019; Diao, 2015), and racist terminology (Antracoli et al., 2019; Antracoli & Rawdon, 2019).

Trans and gender diverse creators are uniquely vulnerable to discrimination and violence directly related to the disclosure of their gender identities through the names assigned to them by systems. Authors applying queer theory to cataloging have also focused on other ways information in authority records out transgender individuals. To illustrate via example, Thompson’s (2016) excellent and relevant article examines the authority records for 60 authors who self-identify as trans to ascertain if their authority records ‘out’ them as trans. By examining fields for recording name and gender, Thompson was able to identify that nearly two thirds (39/60) of the records effectively outed the authors. Only 21 of those 39 records cited the author as the source for the information about their gender identity. Thirty-four of the 39 provided more than one name for the author, either as a name set (alternate versions of a name used simultaneously) or name sequence (names that the author has used in the past but does not currently use). That so many authority records contained sensitive information that did not come from the authors themselves verified Thompson’s concern that authority records may unwittingly — and unacceptably — expose the authors in ways the authors never intended. This issue has been also explored by others who demonstrate that including gender identity in authority records is not necessary for bibliographic purposes (Billey, 2019; Billey et al., 2014, 2016; Billey & Drabinski, 2019).

## **ORIGINS OF THE TRANS METADATA COLLECTIVE**

The initial idea for the Trans Metadata Collective project began as a conversation after a panel at the University of Victoria’s Moving Trans History Forward conference in March 2021. Within a few weeks, planning for what would become the Trans Metadata Collective began in earnest by when K.J. Rawson, Bri(an) M. Watson, Beck Schaefer, Laura Horak, Magnus Berg, Clair Kronk, and Djaz Zulida met in the summer of 2021. Recognizing the limitations of their perspectives, this planning group launched a broad call for participation on Twitter, GLAMS-relevant listservs, and elsewhere. The response to this call was overwhelming, and over a hundred GLAMS professionals expressed interest in participation. Special effort was made to recruit from the mailing lists of communities traditionally underrepresented in GLAMS.

Two large-scale meetings (called the Convening Committee) were held to discuss action plans and organize several working groups that would cover narrower themes and allow individuals to contribute based on their own expertise. These initial working groups were called Descriptive Practices, Subject Headings & Authorities, Name Authorities & Access, and Ethical Recommendations. A Slack workspace was created, and the working groups began meeting to develop individual documents. These documents took a variety of forms, including lists, bibliographies, and formal reports. On a semi-monthly basis, a representative from each working group met in a so-called Coordinating Committee in order to ensure that work was progressing and not being duplicated. As working groups finished preliminary drafts of their self-assigned work, their documents were merged into a larger document, which was edited by one or more representatives from each group. During this year-long process, individuals participated as they were able to and committees remained productive despite the challenges of COVID.

## **TMDC’s use of “Trans and Gender Diverse”**

From the beginning, the TMDC was deliberate in its use of language (perhaps unsurprising, given that it was made up of metadata professionals). The document was meant to be a practical resource for metadata professionals, not a introductory-style ‘Trans 101.’ Members recognized that gender is a complex subject, and chose to explain their rationale behind certain decisions. This is particularly noticeable in the use of “trans and gender diverse” throughout the best practices document. Gender is not just about presentation/identity; it can also include social role and cosmological place, making conceptualizations of gender culturally specific. Translation is one way this fraughtness can be illustrated. While communication, understanding, and overlap exist between communities of people that speak different languages, gender systems may also require translation rather than direct equivalence when a specific metadata term is used. In the United States and the Western world more broadly, there is a culturally dominant understanding of gender as both binary (man vs. woman) and static (gender is based on sex assigned at birth). Other nations and peoples—both historically and in the present—have their own cosmological conceptualizations of the world and of gender where the assumptions of “binary” and “static” may not apply or may be understood very differently. Likewise, trans is a culturally and historically specific framework, which may not map exactly onto other cultural understandings of gender. Therefore the TMDC uses “gender diverse” as a stand-in umbrella term for conceptualizations of gender that fall outside of that static binary; non-Western people and

languages have had and still have their own culturally-specific gender terms, which they may use instead of or alongside the term “trans.”

This is doubly important in the context of GLAMS because of the ways that settler colonialism and colonialism abroad have influenced collecting policies and practices at Western GLAMS. Cultural heritage institutions in the West often hold at least some materials from or about Indigenous peoples; many influential white men from history were also hobbyist ethnographers. What is often called “ethnographic material” is hidden within larger collections, and the TMDC wanted to encourage professionals to consider how these guidelines apply beyond a narrow conventional understanding of “trans archives,” and to understand the ways in which trans and gender diverse resources may appear in other spaces, e.g. material on gender diversity included in an anthropological or “natural” history archive. Current society’s gender terms and/or conceptions do not necessarily map to other cultures or ways of being specific people or communities do not always view themselves as “trans” (Indigenous Two-Spirit identities, for example). While trans and gender diverse are not equivalent, there are many overlapping issues and gender diverse resources from other cultural contexts may also already be labelled with trans-specific subject terms.

### **Authorship & Review**

While the TMDC’s aim was better (or even explicitly articulated) guidelines and best practices for metadata and description of trans and gender diverse resources, it aimed to be intentional in how it gave participants credit for their contributions. As the goal was to create high quality guidelines, but the collective was independently organized and did not have the funding to pay people for their expertise or labor, participation was voluntary and often occurred on top of other existing professional and personal responsibilities. While a top-down and hierarchal structure may be more efficient or clear, the TMDC attempted to create a space where people could choose to participate to the degree that they could and wanted to.

However, goals of timeliness and quality were still of importance and the work of the collective was deeply personal for the vast majority of contributors, so the group aimed to be “intentional not only about what we were making but how we were making it – in how we communicated with one another, shared labor, and made decisions” to quote from one participant. In presenting their work, the Collective aimed to represent the “how” of this process in the clearest way possible, by giving credit for in a way that fairly and accurately reflected the varying labor of contributors and the deeply collaborative and communal process of working collectively, which was oftentimes quite different from how work occurs in other parts of member’s professional lives, in institutions that are generally more hierarchical in decision-making, division of labor, and attribution of credit. Therefore, the individuals listed in the “Authors” section of the final document were primary authors (those who wrote sections), listed alphabetically, and all other authors and reviewers (“contributors”) were listed at the end of the document in whatever order they chose (mostly by peer review order). The TMDC also felt that providing a section with self-description of authors and reviewers at the end of the document also provides additional transparency on who was involved and demonstrated both our expertise and our limitations. The inclusion of reviewers was also seen as important because of the extensive dialogues that occurred during the month-long comment period that allowed the reviewers to shape the final document. This review process was seen by the collective as not style editing, but rather a formative collaborative stage in the overall guideline creation process.

Finally, according to the notes accompanying the authorship section, there were many individuals that elected or opted out of inclusion in either section due to concerns of harassment, local/national political environment, outing, and/or personal danger.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES & PRINCIPLES**

In their recommendations, the TMDC aimed for recommendations that were both concrete and actionable, not just critical or theoretical. While the collective agreed that critique is good and that theoretical frameworks are useful, its the greater goal was encouraging the adoption of consistent best practices easier by GLAMS. Furthermore, over the course of 2021 it became increasingly apparent that there was a need for a document of this type.

After discussing the possible formats of the final document, members envisioned something that would be usable across institution types and experience levels; something that could be applied in both public and academic libraries, archives, museums, and special collections at R1 institutions, independent institutions, or even local historical societies. The collective also aimed for guidelines that basic enough that they could be understood by volunteers, or new professionals, but also desired the inclusion of more detailed recommendations for readers with extensive experience and expertise in technical services, metadata, or other fields. Consequently the collective agreed on a two-part structure for its final document. The first part, entitled “General Guidelines & Principles” was high-level and conceptual, an articulation of principles or achievable goals. The second part, entitled “Domain-Specific & Technical Details” would contain granular technical guidelines to support implementation across a variety of systems. This balance was important to the Collective as their goal was not to hand down instructions from above but instead to provide support to institutions and individuals exercise their professional expertise and discretion in an

informed way. The final high-level guidelines the TMDC settled in their final document (The Trans Metadata Collective et al., 2022, p. 4):

1. making the process of metadata creation transparent, which may include making descriptive standards, rationale, and context publicly available, providing methods for user feedback, and collaborating with community members (with consent and compensation).
2. using culturally and contextually appropriate labels for trans and gender diverse communities and subjects: different cultures and communities may have terms for genders that may not translate into the typical descriptive tone or primary descriptive language. This may include Indigenous vocabulary or community terminology uncontrolled by vocabularies. Collaborate with specific communities and prioritize their terms and protocols alongside controlled vocabularies or otherwise authoritative terms
3. correctly naming and identifying trans individuals, meaning that trans and gender diverse individuals may use different names in different points or contexts in their life and that metadata should rely on self-identification and self-description where possible, including direct consultation with individuals or communities. It is not necessary and not recommended to record information about someone's gender identity or previous names when resources have nothing to do with gender identity.
4. being explicit about transphobia in collections, items, and metadata, meaning that metadata should identify perpetrators and victims and use active voice and subject headings to "embed responsibility." Metadata workers and policies should aim to correct, update and remediate offensive or inaccurate language provided by other metadata creators.
5. identifying trans-related content and metadata through regular assessment and prioritizing it for remediation, meaning that institutions should plan proactively for periodic assessment and remediation, including the identification of materials related to trans and gender diverse communities and individuals, especially when they are parts of larger collections where they are not the focus. We also recommend avoiding using automation for batch replacement and caution when using externally supplied records.

## **DOMAIN-SPECIFIC & TECHNICAL DETAILS**

The second major section of the document was aimed at workers with extensive experience and expertise in technical services and metadata. The collective recognized that these readers, especially those in libraries with outdated infrastructure, may face additional challenges in implementing the second and third recommendation as their work relies heavily on standards and controlled vocabularies. The most commonly used of these are RDA and the LCSH. RDA gives instructions for identifying and recording bibliographic information. LCSH provides standardized terminology for describing the subject matter of a resource.

Though limited, there are a few critiques of bibliographic descriptive systems and their impacts on trans and gender diverse people. Billey, Drabinski, and Roberto (2014) criticize the RDA instruction to record a person's gender as reinforcing a fixed and binary conception of gender and disregarding gender self-identification. They also note that gender information is generally irrelevant to the user tasks of finding and selecting library resources. Thompson (2016) further identifies areas where gender may be recorded indirectly and points out potential problems with using former names in metadata. Thompson advocates that creators be given agency in how they are represented in library metadata. Adler (2009), Johnson (2010), Jardine (2013) and Roberto (2011) demonstrate various ways that LCSH under- and misrepresents trans people. Johnson sees a potential solution in the use of alternative vocabularies and social tagging while Adler suggests the use of folksonomies. While valuable, the recommendations in the literature are of a general nature and do not provide the granular level of instruction in reference to RDA and LCSH that catalogers need. Therefore, TMDC members drew from their own personal cataloging practices and observations, an examination of RDA and LCSH, and their associated documentation. The collective also incorporated feedback from reviewers familiar with these systems.

### **Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)**

At the time of TMDC's founding, there were only four broad categories of trans identities: "Transgender people", "Gender nonconforming people", "Transsexuals", and "Two-spirit people", the latter of which is only appropriate for Indigenous resources. In turn, there were only three concepts for gender diversity: "Gender identity", "Gender nonconformity", and "Gender expression". A few headings did exist centered on lived experience, including: "Gender transition"; "Transphobia"; "Gender-neutral toilet facility"; and "Social work with gender-nonconforming youth". Though it may be obvious, the authors would like point out that eleven headings are hardly enough to encapsulate the entirety of trans life, culture, history, and more; not to mention the complete inadequacy of one heading for all of Indigenous gender identity, including those of Indigenous nations that do not have or use the concept of Two-Spirit.

While LCSH does not adequately represent trans people, the TMDC recognized that it is so entrenched in cataloging practice that it would have been impractical to recommend entirely against its use. Therefore, the report provides an overview and assessment of existing LCSHs that are relevant to transness and gender diversity. The collective identifies a significant list of harmful LCSH to avoid, aiding catalogers in avoiding harmful language. A few other subject headings require care in use since they are formulated in a way that erases trans experience, such as: “Coming out (Sexual orientation)” and “Outing (Sexual orientation).” While trans and gender-diverse people come out and are outed in ways similar to lesbian, gay, or bisexual people, unfortunately, LCSH uses headings specifically referring to sexual orientation. There is a distinction between coming out (telling people one's true gender) and disclosing (telling people one's trans status). To describe the latter concept, the collective recommends the use of the headings “Self-disclosure” and “Gender identity” (The Trans Metadata Collective et al., 2022, p. 12). The document details nuanced implementation for these headings and others. Following these terminology lists, the report then presents strategies to address the inadequacy of LCSH in subjects relating to gender. These recommendations include the use of alternative subject vocabularies, such as Homosaurus, which can provide more specific, nuanced, or rich terminology than what is currently available in LCSH. Utilizing terms of self-identification elsewhere in the bibliographic record are also encouraged to ensure that the record is included in search results for that term. The collective advocates proposing new LCSHs and revisions to existing LCSHs, with the document providing resources for this process.

### **Resource Description and Access (RDA)**

RDA includes instructions on recording names and personal attributes, including gender. These instructions apply to bibliographic records (a record containing information about a resource, such as title, author, etc.) and name authority records (NARs). NARs are brief records that include various forms of a person's name (including the standardized form), distinguishing biographical information, and a citation for at least one work written.

#### *Names*

RDA instructs that the name of an author (or other creator) appears in a bibliographic record in two forms: the form that appears on the resource and the standardized form used in the NAR. This practice can lead to not only a former name displaying publicly but a former and current name displaying together. This can out trans people, potentially putting them in danger.

The TMDC's primary recommendation is to give authors and other creators agency over how they should be named in library metadata. To this end, the document illustrates how to contact individuals to inquire about former names and document their preferences. Acknowledging that consultation is not always possible, the collective recommends using the author or creator's most recent name and avoiding former names if their preference is not known. While this is not necessarily the preference of all trans and gender diverse people, this approach was designed to minimize any potential harm and protect privacy. In some cases, it may be necessary to use a former name in a non-public way to link all works by a single person together. The report also provides coding instructions for this.

#### *Gender*

RDA provides the option to directly record gender in NARs. Gender and gender identity may also be recorded indirectly (e.g. gendered occupations). The collective recommends that gendered information should not be recorded either directly or indirectly. While working on the document (April 2022), the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) Ad Hoc Task Group on Recording Gender in Personal Name Authority Records released their revised report recommending that gender not be directly recorded in NARs, stating that NARs are not meant to primarily contain biographical information, but instead only meant to disambiguate between names (Billey et al., 2016). This recommendation has been adopted as official policy. The PCC Task Group on Gender (a successor to the initial ad hoc task group) is currently formulating guidance on indirect recording of gender amongst other issues, including gender-related name changes and gendered terminology in LCSH. Their final report is scheduled to be released in August 2024.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Trans Metadata Collective's document, *Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources* was initially released in June of 2022. Since its release the report has circulated widely, reaching past 10,000 downloads and has been partially or locally implemented in various GLAMS institutions. After publication, the collective's focus lies in continuing dissemination of its recommendations to broader professional audiences, encouraging further local implementation, and updating the report when needed.

To achieve in creating accurate metadata for trans and gender diverse communities and their works, metadata workers must take a reflective approach, centering trans and gender diverse information protocols and reciprocally building relationships with those being described when appropriate. The recommendations outlined in this paper consciously steer professionals away from harmful terminology and workflows used in libraries and archives.

Further work is needed to expand these best practices into other institutional and professional spaces, including both cultural heritage and broader information science contexts.

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