



A2A - Guidelines for Indexing and Authority Controlled Terms

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1	1/12/2002	
1.1	23/1/2003	Amendments following team training; addition of references to NRA and CASBAH for finding terms

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Introduction

Contributors of catalogues to A2A are asked to provide index terms and creator names to provide users with a 'special interest' search option that is targeted at particular people, families, bodies, places and subjects, in addition to the simple keyword search.

In order for this search to work effectively, contributors to A2A have to be consistent in both their choice of index terms and in the format of index terms and creator names.

This document is made of two parts:

- A brief statement of what should be considered when choosing index terms
- Basic guidance in the construction of index terms and creator names with examples

This document supersedes 'A2A – Authority Controlled Terms and minimum conformity' (July 2000).

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Choosing index terms for A2A

General considerations

It is important to remember that the aim of the special interest searches in the A2A database is not to provide users with a route to every particular instance of a name, place or subject as one might find in an index to a published book. The standard keyword search is designed for intensive detailed interrogation of A2A. Rather the purpose of the special interest search is to provide users with an 'at a glance' view of the catalogues within the database that are most likely to be concerned with the person or subject, etc, that they are most interested in.

From this, it follows that:

- Index entries will normally be at fonds or sub-fonds levels, rather than file and item
- There will not normally need to be a large number of index entries per fonds
- Index terms chosen should be based on the content of records

When choosing index terms consider what each catalogue is actually about. Consider which people, families, bodies, places and subjects a catalogue is rich in information about. Scope and content descriptions at the upper levels of a catalogue will be a useful guide.

If in doubt about the 'richness' of a catalogue in relation to a particular name or subject ask the question, *Would a user interested in this person, etc really need to see this catalogue in preference to most of the others in the database?*

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Considerations relating to particular types of term

Persons

- Names of people given as creators should not be repeated as index terms.
- Do not index every person mentioned. Only index people if the records throw light on the life, career, and achievements etc of the person concerned.

Families

- Names of families given as creators should not be repeated as index terms.
- Families are most likely to be given as creators of family and estate collections. Their use is less likely as an index term.

Corporate bodies

- Names of corporate bodies given as creators should not be repeated as index terms.

Places

- Only index for place, if records illuminate the life within, or history of, a place. If the records of a company, for example, contain significant material about the area in which they operate that a local historian would find useful then index for place. If, however, the records are solely concerned with manufacturing then an index term for place would be inappropriate.

Subjects

- Subject terms chosen should be at a broad conceptual level: that is reflecting the major topics with which a collection is concerned.
- Do not confuse subjects with archive categories (management groups), which relate to the type of organisation that created

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the records rather than what they are about. A family estate archive, for example, will not usually be about genealogy or family organisation, and will often only be indexed for place.

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Standards for the construction of creator names and index terms

Introduction

Authority Control and the A2A database

In deciding on the make up of each type of term, the underlying factor has been the national scope of the A2A database and the needs of users searching it. In order for the special interest searches in the A2A database to work there needs to be one, and only one, term for each person, family, body, place, subject or event represented. Moreover, the term needs to unambiguously identify the person, family, body, place, subject or event it represents. To achieve this A2A uses particular standards to control the content and format of terms.

Standards for the construction of creator names and index terms

Cataloguing Standards for A2A states that personal, family, corporate and place names given by contributors as index terms should be in the form suggested by the NCA Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names. It is also stated that subject terms offered should be formulated in accordance with the UNESCO Thesaurus. The *Standards* also adopt the principle of minimum conformity. Below will be found statements of what minimum conformity to the NCA rules and the UNESCO Thesaurus means in the context of A2A.

What follows should be seen as a guide only and A2A will accept terms that more fully conform to detailed NCA rules when appropriate.

In general where the NCA rules suggest the use of 'pipe' (|) to separate elements of a name a comma should be used instead.

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Personal Names

Standards

Personal names offered as creator names and index terms should be in the form laid out in the NCA rules: personal names within the element Immediate Source of Acquisition do not need to be in NCA form.

Check the ‘Special Interest Search’ in the A2A database and if the name to be indexed appears, construct it in exactly the same way. If the name does not appear check the National Register of Archives (NRA: <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/nra/nra2.htm>) and if found construct the name in the form suggested below.

Format and examples

A personal name should consist of surname, a forename (in most cases), and dates. Titles should always be given for those that had them. Epithets should be included particularly in the case of the names of ordinary people where, in a national context, confusion may result.

- Crokot, Mary, 1898-1999, of Wemdon, Somerset
- Wilson, Malcolm, d 1900, Captain

Where the NCA rules suggest that a ‘see’ cross-reference is supplied in relation to surnames of particular form or type then it would be useful if a term in this form was also supplied (Compound surnames or names of married woman for example, see NCA rules 2.3.A pp 14-19).

- Cecil, James Edward Hubert, Gascoyne-, 1861-1947, 4th Marquess of Salisbury
- Gascoyne-Cecil, James Edward Hubert, 1861-1947, 4th Marquess of Salisbury

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Family Names

Standards

Family names offered as creator names and index terms should be in the form laid out in the NCA rules: family names within the element Immediate Source of Acquisition do not need to be in NCA form.

Check the ‘Special Interest Search’ in the A2A database and if the name to be indexed appears, construct it in exactly the same way. If the name does not appear check the National Register of Archives (NRA: <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/nra/nra2.htm>) and if found construct the name in the form suggested below.

Format and examples

Family names should consist of the name and the epithet ‘family’. If the family holds a title in the period to which the records relate then it should be given, as should any major occupation. Territorial designations should be added if useful to distinguish between families with common names.

- Hammond family of Westacre, Norfolk

In cases where the NCA rules suggest a ‘see’ cross-reference it would be useful if this was also supplied.

- Bentinck, Cavendish-, family
- Cavendish-Bentinck family

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Corporate Names

Standards

Corporate names offered as creator names and index terms should be in the form laid out in the NCA rules. Corporate names within the elements Immediate Source of Acquisition or Location of Originals do not need to be in NCA form. Repository names will be in NCA form as agreed with the A2A contributor.

Check the 'Special Interest Search' in the A2A database and if the name to be indexed appears, construct it in exactly the same way. If the name does not appear check the National Register of Archives (NRA: <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/nra/nra2.htm>) and if found construct the name in the form suggested below.

Format and examples

Corporate names should consist of the formal name of a body in natural language order. Do not begin a name with 'The' unless the sense of the body would be lost (see NCA rules, 4.5.1). The formal name should be qualified by the dates of the body's existence when known except in repository names.

- Somerset Constabulary, 1856-1967

Other qualifiers should be used as necessary in order to identify particular bodies. In general the order of qualifiers should be as in the NCA rules 4.4.

- C D Holmes and Company Ltd, Hull, marine engineers
- Manor Hospital, Epsom

Jurisdictions should be included where necessary for clarity and should precede the main name.

- Manor Hospital, Epsom, Sherwood Training Unit

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The rules for subordinate bodies should also be followed (NCA rules, 4.9). If a subordinate body has a separate identity and is to be given without a jurisdiction, it would be useful if a second term was provided with the name as a sub-heading to the name of that jurisdiction. In the case of the Bodleian Library, for example, both terms below should be provided.

- Bodleian Library
- University of Oxford, Bodleian Library

If the catalogue in question covers the period for which a body changed its name then all names should be given.

- Laird Brothers Ltd, 1899-1903
- Cammell Laird and Company Ltd, 1903-1951
- Cammell Laird and Co Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd, 1951-1970

If a body uses variant names formally then all of these should be offered if known. Also, offer all the relevant terms if known in cases involving conventional names and names in the form of initials or acronyms.

- National and Local Government Officers Association
- NALGO

Formats for particular types of corporate bodies

Particular conventions have developed in A2A for the following types of corporate names:

Parishes: Names of Church of England parishes should always include the jurisdiction 'Church of England'. The name of the parish should be qualified by the term 'Parish' and the county name.

- Church of England, Abbots Bickington Parish, Devon

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Companies: Names of companies should include an indication of status (e.g. Ltd or PLC). Do not add the designation 'Messrs' to company names.

- British Telecommunications PLC

Regiments: When forming the names of units of armed forces bodies and other bodies similarly titled (scout and guide troops for example), the jurisdiction names noted by the NCA rules ('Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Army') should not be included. A number should be used where appropriate rather than a word.

- 3rd Dragoon Guards
- 47th County of London Battalion, Home Guard
- 1st Stalybridge Girl Guides Company, Cheshire

Manors and estates: Manors and (landed) estates should be given as corporate names rather than as place names. The name of the manor or estate should always come first with the words 'manor, or 'estate' at the end of the term. It is useful in these cases to add a place qualifier.

- Hornby Grange Estate, North Riding of Yorkshire
- Wakefield Manor, West Riding of Yorkshire

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Place Names

Standards

Place names offered as index terms should be in the form laid out in the NCA rules.

Check the 'Special Interest Search' in the A2A database and if the name to be indexed appears, construct it in exactly the same way.

Format and examples

A place name should consist of the name itself and the appropriate parent administrative unit. For places in the UK and Ireland the county should also always be given. For places outside the UK and Ireland the country should always be given.

More recent forms of a place name and variant names should also be given when known.

There is no need to include OS National Grid references or identification by latitude and longitude.

- Hadleigh, Suffolk
- New Delhi, India

Formats for particular types of place

Yorkshire: When giving a term for the parts of the county of Yorkshire for records dated before 1974 the full Riding name should be given in natural language order.

- East Riding of Yorkshire
- North Riding of Yorkshire
- West Riding of Yorkshire

Rivers: When indexing a river two terms should be provided. One should begin with the name of the river and one with 'River'.

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- Nile River
- River Nile

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Subjects

Standards

Subject terms offered should be taken from the UNESCO Thesaurus Sections 1-6: (printed version, UNESCO 1995; online version, <http://www.ulcc.ac.uk/unesco/>). Section 7 of the Thesaurus relates to places and should only be used as a source for examples for the construction of terms in NCA rules form as discussed above. Thought should be given to a term's context within the UNESCO Thesaurus hierarchy in order that the most appropriate term is chosen.

If a suitable term for a subject cannot be found in the UNESCO Thesaurus then the A2A database should be consulted to see if a suitable term has already been added. If not then consult the following online resources to see if an appropriate term is available:

- Public Record Office's Online Catalogue (<http://catalogue.pro.gov.uk/>)
- National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD: <http://ndad.ulcc.ac.uk/search/thesaurus.htm>)
- AIM25 (<http://www.aim25.ac.uk/search/>)
- CASBAH (<http://www.casbah.ac.uk/search/subjects/az.htm>)

If no term can be found offer a broad conceptual term, with a suggestion of where it would fit into the UNESCO Thesaurus.

Examples

- Armed forces (UNESCO 6.20)
- Education (UNESCO 1.05)
- Health services (UNESCO 4.25)
- Local government (UNESCO 6.15)
- Religion (UNESCO 3.20)
- Water supply (UNESCO 2.50)

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Events

Standards

Events are defined as subjects in A2A. There is no single source for events: consult the PRO Online Catalogue's index and, if available, the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH).

Format and examples

The name of the events should be given in natural language order followed by the date(s) of when it took place.

- Battle of Britain, 1940

Formats for particular types of event

The following wars should be referred to as follows:

- South African War, 1899-1902 (rather than Boer War etc)
- First World War, 1914-1918 (rather than World War 1 etc)
- Second World War, 1939-1945 (rather than World War 2 etc)

Combined operations should start with 'Operation':

- Operation Market Garden, 1944