Recommendation of the ad-hoc FAST Task Group

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To: Technical Services Standing Committee (TSSC)

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SUMMARY

In April of 2015, the Technical Services Standing Committee (TSSC) charged the FAST Task Group to examine the previously proposed project by the TSSC in 2014 on the optimal use of FAST headings in Aleph and Mango and to provide recommendations to the TSSC for further exploration in the context of potential migration to a new "next gen" Integrated Library System (ILS). This document summarizes the Task Group's investigation of current FAST application and recommends a three-part solution for optimal use of FAST headings in the new catalog:

1. guidelines to ensure consistent and beneficial practice;
2. technological enhancements to improve back- and front-end user experiences;
3. a program of training and outreach to promote the above.

BACKGROUND

FAST

FAST (Faceted Application of Subject Terminology)[1] is a controlled vocabulary derived from, and that maintains upward compatibility with, the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). Since late 1998, OCLC Research has been developing FAST in a collaboration with the Library of Congress. After full development, FAST has evolved into an eight-class vocabulary containing approximately 1.7 million headings, including concepts for topical subjects, geographic places, corporate and personal names, events, work titles, and formats.

FAST is designed as a general-purpose subject vocabulary that is "simple to learn and apply, faceted-navigation-friendly, and modern in its design."[1] It is designed to meet the needs of fast-paced metadata production, alongside Web-based metadata applications.[2] Compared

with LCSH, which was designed for use by trained library specialists. FAST headings are easy to apply without specialized training, making the vocabulary attractive for resource description projects involving a variety of participants. Compared with LCSH, which was designed to enable alphabetical filing in a card catalog, FAST is contemporary and Web-friendly. FAST headings are easy to use in faceted navigation systems, making the vocabulary attractive for modern catalog design. FAST headings have a one-to-one relationship between headings and authority records, making the vocabulary attractive for use in relational and graph databases. FAST headings are simplified and generic, making the vocabulary attractive for data integration when used in the higher level properties of an ontology that bring together multiple thesauri. Furthermore, FAST is published as Linked Data, making the vocabulary attractive for use with the BIBFRAME model, and other Linked Data projects in libraries.

FAST headings are systematically added to OCLC bibliographic records, and thus, are available through OCLC copy cataloging.

Charge and Activity

A TSSC project was proposed to create a pragmatic approach to FAST implementation in the back-end Aleph catalog database and front-end Mango discovery interface. As a result, the Ad Hoc FAST Task Group was formed in April 2015, and charged to provide recommendations to the TSSC for further exploration on optimal use of FAST headings in the context of potential migration to a "next generation" Integrated Library System. The Task Force analyzed bibliographic records with FAST headings and their behavior in Aleph, Mango, OCLC, WorldCat, and other front-end library catalogs. The Task Group also surveyed staff at the state university and college libraries, to understand policy, guidelines, and/or workflow surrounding FAST headings. Below is a summary of known problems to arise from this analysis and survey, followed by solutions for improved application of FAST headings.

Problems

Current application of FAST by the TSSC community is un-coordinated and confusing on both the back and front end.

In back-end cataloging work, the state university and college libraries maintain heterogeneous practices in the application and use of FAST headings. Some libraries ignore FAST headings, some actively delete them as redundant to LCSH, while others recognize their value, especially in the context of faceted browsing and Linked Data applications. The Task Group conducted a

survey [3], which shows a high percentage of libraries “ignore whether or not FAST Headings are present” (61%), while some “delete FAST Headings” (13%), and only a few “add FAST Headings” (6.5%). Only one institution edits FAST headings.

This heterogeneity can be attributed to the limited availability of training regarding FAST, and to a variety of staffing levels devoted to cataloging. Additionally, OCLC's addition of FAST to WorldCat records seems to prevent catalogers from voluntary contribution of FAST headings to OCLC. Example survey responses include: "If they are there, I leave them. If they are not there, I am not going back and adding them"; "I take OCLC records as they appear, keeping FAST headings when I import a record. If I add a subject heading to a record, I do not add FAST headings for it."

In the front-end discovery interface, Mango displays both LCSH and FAST headings side-by-side, which brings confusion to users when LCSH and FAST headings appear duplicative.

PROPOSAL

The solution to optimal FAST implementation will be a combination of guidelines on practice, technical enhancements, and outreach to the state university and college library community.

Guidelines

Guidance should be given to both the State University System (SUS) and the Florida College System (FCS) libraries that addresses use of FAST headings during copy, enhanced, and original cataloging, for library, archives, special collections, and digital collections material. This guidance should be platform- and format-agnostic, as participating libraries may work with a variety of tools and utilities (such as a local catalog or database, OCLC Connexion, XML editor, Open Refine, etc.) and may re-purpose metadata from a variety of sources (such as vendors, Z39.50, etc.) All of this metadata will be aggregated into a unified discovery layer index, and consistent application of FAST will fuel collocation.

The Task Group recommends the following general guidelines:

- Retain FAST headings in existing metadata
- Select subject headings intended for faceted browsing from the FAST vocabulary
- Include and properly encode Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs) for FAST concepts

In particular, the Task Group recommends adding and/or editing the following language in the State University System of Florida Libraries *Guidelines and Procedures for the Shared Bibliographic Catalog*:

- Under section 3.3.3.3 Subject Headings, add: "Subject headings intended for faceted navigation should be derived from the FAST vocabulary. FAST headings should be coded, including URIs, according to the pattern: 655_7 Term. $2 fast $0 (OCoLC)fst123456789. OCLC's assignFAST gadget can be used to look up headings and URIs: http://experimental.worldcat.org/fast/assignfast/ OCLC's FAST Converter tool may be used to derive FAST headings from LCSH headings: http://experimental.worldcat.org/fast/fastconverter/"
- Under section 3.3.3.3 Subject Headings, edit "Do not delete appropriately coded non-LC subject heading" to highlight retainment of FAST headings: "Do not delete appropriately coded non-LC subject headings. Especially, do not delete FAST headings, which are used for faceted navigation in user interfaces."
- Under section 3.3.3.4 Genre/Form Headings, edit "Genre and form headings found in a standard thesaurus are preferred and should be coded appropriately. Local genre headings should be coded as 655_7 $2 local." to encourage use of FAST: "Genre and form headings found in the FAST vocabulary are preferred."

And the Task Group recommends adding the following language in the Florida College System *LINCC Database Guidelines*:

- Under section 2.2.10 Topical Subject Headings, add: "FAST subject headings (field 6xx, second indicator 7, $2 fast) may be corrected or changed. FAST headings should be coded, including URIs, according to the pattern: 655_7 Term. $2 fast $0 (OCoLC)fst123456789. OCLC's assignFAST gadget can be used to look up headings and URIs: http://experimental.worldcat.org/fast/assignfast/ OCLC's FAST Converter tool may be used to derive FAST headings from LCSH headings: http://experimental.worldcat.org/fast/fastconverter/"

All participating libraries should be encouraged to update their local guidelines, policies, and procedures to reflect the above changes. Additionally, participating libraries should be encouraged to join OCLC's upcoming FAST listserv.

Vendors should be encouraged to use and supply records sourced from the OCLC database, to improve the likelihood that FAST headings will be included in their data. To this end, vendors might be encouraged to take advantage of the WorldShare Collection Manager: https://www.oclc.org/support/services/collection-manager.en.html.

Technical Enhancements

Cataloging Tools

The Task Group recommends that tools for user-supplied metadata, such as Institutional Repositories (IRs) and electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) platforms, leverage OCLC's assignFAST gadget, an auto-suggest tool for selection of FAST headings and URIs. This allows the user a way of providing subject access in a controlled, yet intuitive manner.

OCLC's assignFAST gadget could also be implemented in library cataloging tools. Even experienced catalogers will find its quick look-up of subject headings an improvement over manual workflows. And since all FAST headings are mapped to LCSH, LCSH headings could be provided by maintaining a normalized mapping of FAST to LCSH.

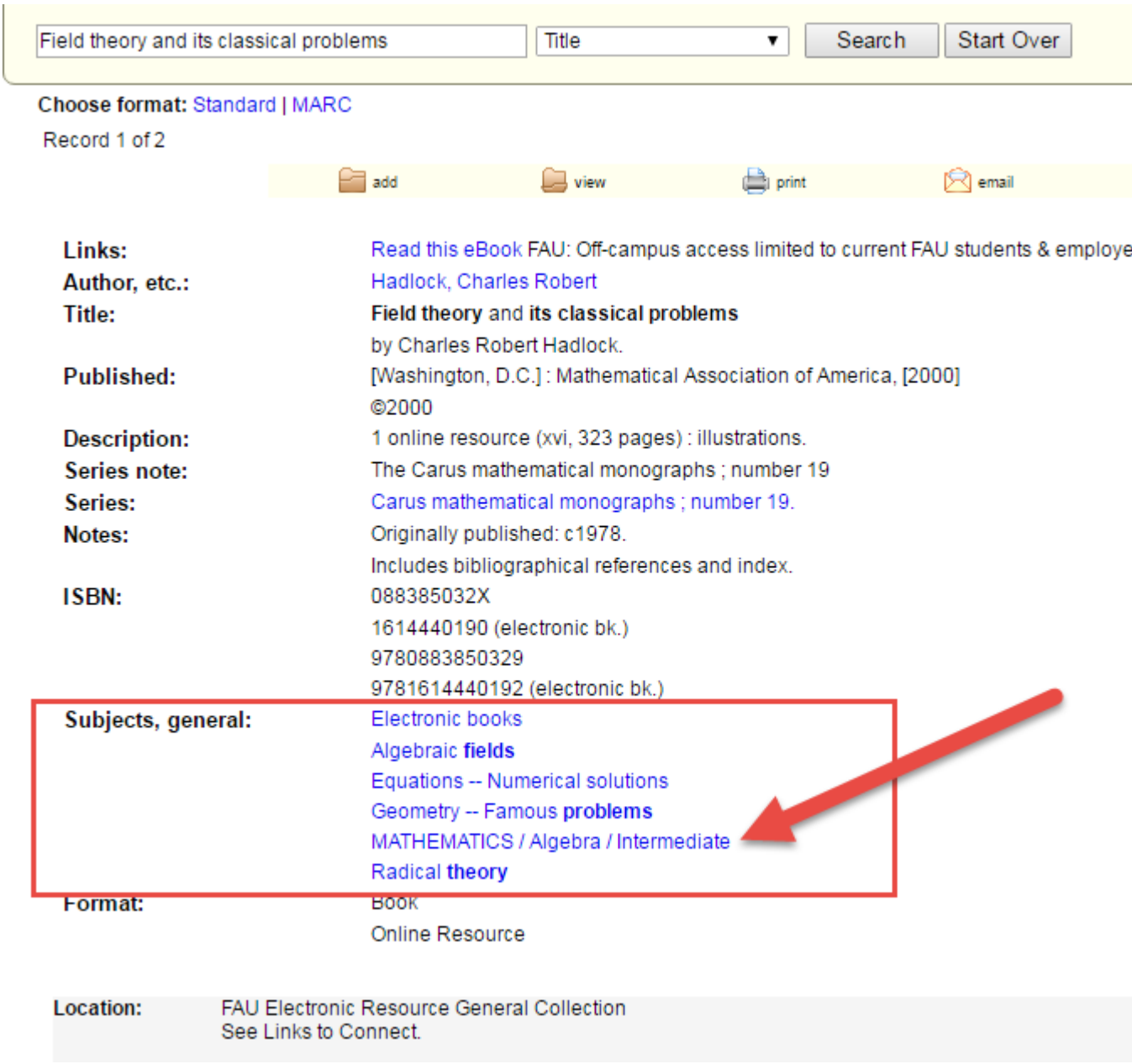
User Interface

The Task Group recommends collocating headings not on their text string labels, but rather on their Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs, found in $0). This approach is more precise and lowers the need for near matching algorithms.

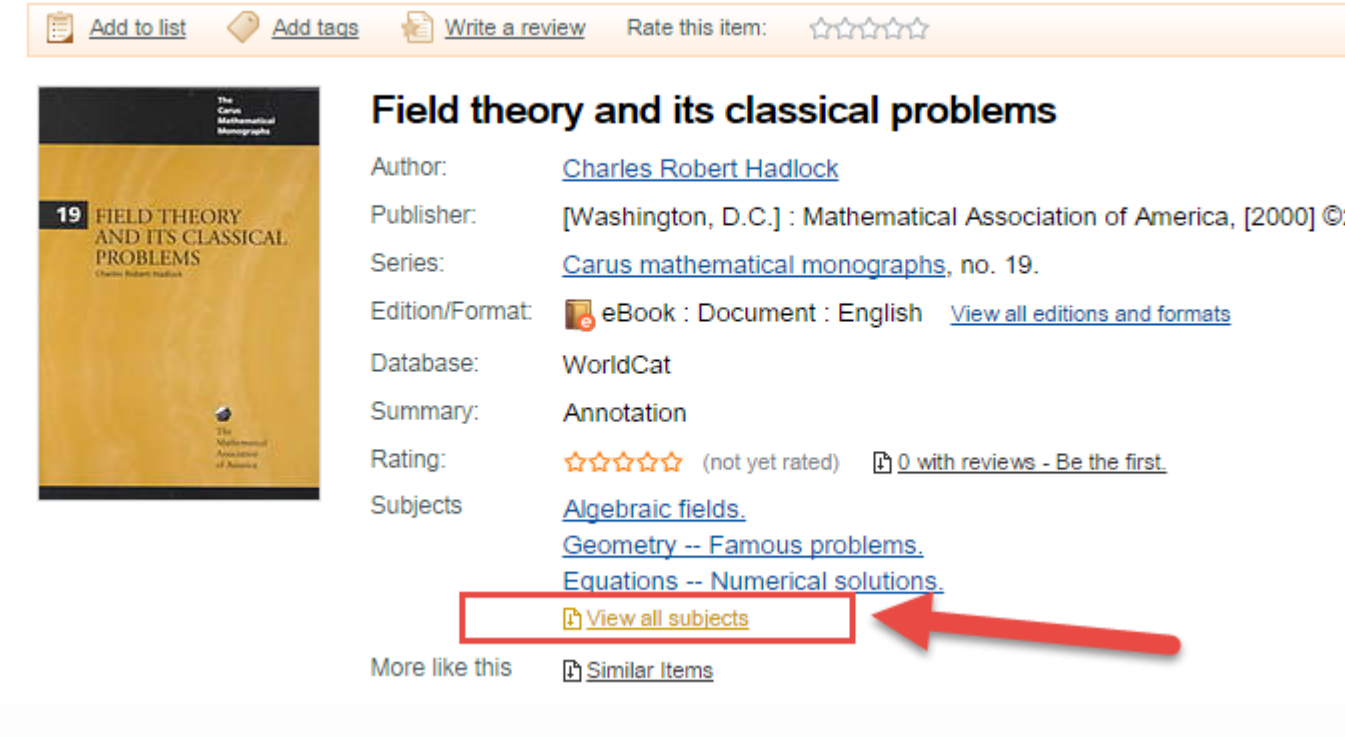
The group recommends that faceted navigation leverage FAST headings rather than the more cumbersome LCSH. For one example, please see the Cornell University Library catalog (https://newcatalog.library.cornell.edu/). For another, please see OCLC's WorldCat interface. Both platforms feature LCSH headings in records, and FAST headings in faceted navigation menus. WorldCat offers the user a "View all subjects" option which will expose the FAST headings.

Currently, Mango displays both the FAST and the LCSH Headings, as well as other subject headings side-by-side. Using FAST in faceted navigation menus would not displace LCSH headings nor would they be duplicated as they are now. The Task Group feels this solution will be helpful in avoiding confusion for our users in the brief record display, as opposed to the current display by Mango.

Mango Subject Displays



WorldCat Subject Displays



Training & Outreach

Training and outreach is needed to teach the benefits and application of the FAST vocabulary, and to implement the guidelines recommended above, to SUL and FCS libraries. Training and outreach should adapt to the different needs of the state universities and colleges. The Task Group recommends that a TSSC group be appointed to coordinate training.

The Task Group recommends that the revised guidelines described above, with the addition of language on FAST, be promoted at TSSC meetings and at Cataloging, Authorities, and Metadata (CAM) committee meetings. The FLVC-CAT-UNIV and FLVC-TECHSERV discussion lists should also be used to publicize recommendations.

The Task Group recommends a pilot project with both SUS and FCS libraries to figure out workflows and inform guidelines to be used by all. This pilot project can study current workflows and determine potential obstacles to implementing universal adoption of shared

guidelines. The pilot project should have members that vary in size from major research libraries to small libraries at some of the state colleges.

Consideration should be given to developing one or more webinars that can spread the word. Regarding FAST headings in particular, a brief video explaining FAST and recommendations for usage could be created and disseminated widely.

OCLC Research has worked with institutions implementing FAST and possibly could help here. Potential contacts are Kerre Kammerer, a FAST team member at OCLC Research, and Dr. Diane Vizine-Goetz, the project leader.

CONCLUSION

In order to make optimal use of the FAST vocabulary and its associated tools in back-end cataloging workflows and front-end discovery experiences, the Task Group recommends a three-part approach to FAST implementation in the new catalog system:

1) Provide guidelines on the application of FAST, including instruction to retain FAST headings in copy cataloging, to achieve faceted browsing with the FAST vocabulary, and to encode URIs. Offer specific language for inclusion in the State University System of Florida Libraries '"Guidelines and Procedures for the Shared Bibliographic Catalog *and the Florida College System* LINCC Database Guidelines.
2) Enhance back-end cataloging tools with OCLC's assignFAST gadget and front-end discovery interfaces with collocation based on URIs and faceted browsing around FAST.
3) Provide training and outreach to state university and college libraries to promote implementation of the above.

REFERENCES

[1] OCLC Research, "FAST (Faceted Application of Subject Terminology)" http://www.oclc.org/research/themes/data-science/fast.html
[2] Jeffrey Mixter and Eric R. Childress, "FAST (Faceted Application of Subject Terminology) Users: Summary and Use Cases"http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2013/2013-04.pdf
[3] TSSC ad hoc FAST Task Group, "How are you using FAST Headings?" http://goo.gl/forms/jg1nKG6nQb