Information Equity in the College Library

Washington Library Association Conference
November 4, 2017

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Ideas we will explore today

How does the way information is curated shape our perceptions?

How do our perceptions shape reality?

What kinds of bias are inherent in the systems used to curate information?
Our journey at the Pierce Library

“Where are the Black psychologists?”
“Google provides an advertising algorithm, not an information retrieval algorithm.”
What if we let Google tell us what about us is valuable?
What if we let Google tell us what we can be?
Google algorithm at work
• Search for “martin luther king”

#6 result is a hate site
What is Google’s position on information curation?

“Our search results are generated objectively and are independent of the beliefs and preferences of those who work at Google. A site's ranking in Google's search results is automatically determined by computer algorithms using hundreds of factors to calculate a page's relevance to a given query. The only sites we omit from our search results are those we are legally compelled to remove or those maliciously attempting to manipulate our results.”

(from an interview conducted by Huff Post reporter Keith Thomson -- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/keith-thomson/white-supremacist-site-ma_b_809755.html)
What is our profession’s position on information curation?

"Intellectual freedom can exist only where two essential conditions are met: first, that all individuals have the right to hold any belief on any subject and to convey their ideas in any form they deem appropriate, and second, **that society makes an equal commitment to the right of unrestricted access to information and ideas regardless of the communication medium used, the content of work, and the viewpoints of both the author and the receiver of information.**"

*Intellectual Freedom Manual, 7th edition*
Don’t be evil

Be just
How is money involved?

- Google has acquired over 200 companies.
Speaking of Wikipedia...

Did Media Literacy Backfire?

As I detailed in my book *It’s Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*, too many students I met were being told that Wikipedia was untrustworthy and were, instead, being encouraged to do research. As a result, the message that many had taken home was to turn to Google and use whatever came up first. They heard that Google was trustworthy and Wikipedia was not.

-danah boyd, Social Scientist
Google is an ADVERTISING company
What about the library?
How is money involved?

- Pierce College library results and content neutrality
Other Library Consolidation

Together, Follett and Baker & Taylor will provide librarians, patrons, educators, students and families with unprecedented access to the best physical and digital content wherever reading and learning take place.

“Creates the world’s largest single source of curated content and multimedia” - From the Follett website
"it’s a logical impossibility to create a querying tool that doesn’t have any form of bias." Andrew Asher, assessment librarian at Indiana University at Bloomington
How inclusive are LC Subject Headings?

COLLG 110 College Success
Library Resources Activity
In this activity, you will explore the physical space of the library. Follow the directions carefully and answer the questions completely for each section.

Before you leave the classroom, use the Library of Congress (LC) Classification System handout to identify and record subject areas of interest to you and your partner.

For example: name Super Student name Elated Learner

subject: Nurse subject: Business

LC class: RT LC class: HD

Your name ___________________ Your partner’s name ___________________
Your subject ___________________ Your partner’s subject ___________________

LC class ___________ LC class ___________

Circulating Books
Directions: Go to the tall shelves of books. Use the Library of Congress Classification System to find your subject area that you identified above.

1. Think about the word circulating. What do you think it means that a book “circulates?”

2. Bring back a book from each of the subject areas you and your partner identified.

Reference Books
Directions: Go to the short shelves of books near the library classroom. Use the Library of Congress Classification System to find your subject area that you identified above.

1. Think about the word reference. What do you think it means that a book is a “reference” book? What type of information is found in these books?
In response to constituent requests, the Policy and Standards Division of the Library of Congress, which maintains Library of Congress Subject Headings, has investigated the possibility of cancelling or revising the heading Illegal aliens. PSD also explored the possibility of revising the broader term Aliens. It concluded that the meaning of Aliens is often misunderstood and should be revised to Noncitizens, and that the phrase illegal aliens has become pejorative. The heading illegal aliens will therefore be cancelled and replaced by two headings, Noncitizens and Unauthorized immigration, which may be assigned together to describe resources about people who illegally reside in a country.

Library of Congress to Cancel the Subject Heading "Illegal Aliens", March 22, 2016

[DISCUSSION DRAFT]

April 7, 2016

H.R.

To direct the Librarian of Congress to retain the headings “Aliens” and “Illegal aliens” in the Library of Congress Subject Headings.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. Black introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ________

A BILL

To direct the Librarian of Congress to retain the headings “Aliens” and “Illegal aliens” in the Library of Congress Subject Headings.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
Systems

Photo by CWCS Managed Hosting
QUESTIONING AUTHORITY: HOW REFERENCE AND LC DISTORT HISTORY

A Case Study with Brazil’s Dictatorship
QUESTION

Librarians value multiple perspectives.
But is it a perspective—or something else—when traditionally authoritative sources omit half the truth?
• U.S. forces involved in Operation Condor
• Linked to U.S. security establishment
• The U.S.’s “parallel state”
• U.S. clandestine operations in the name of “democracy.”

Operación Condor
State-sponsored terrorism – Latin America
Political crimes and offenses – Latin America
American nun
Kidnapped by U.S.-backed Guatemalan junta
Tortured by American military officer
Case ignored by U.S. government

Ortiz, Dianna
Nuns – Guatemala – Biography
Nuns – United States – Biography
Christians
Monasticism and religious orders for women

Torture
Torture—Guatemala
Torture victims—United States

Coups d’état—Guatemala?
Where is Guatemala?
Guatavita, Lake (Colombia)
  UF Laguna de Guatavita (Colombia)
  Lake Guatavita (Colombia)
  BT Lakes—Colombia

Guatemala
  —Antiquities
    NT Aqua Tibia Site (Guatemala)

History
  —To 1821
  —1821-1945
  —Revolution, 1871
    [F1466.45]
  —20th century
  —October Revolution, 1944
    [F1466.45]
    UF October Revolution, Guatemala, 1944
  —1945-1985
    —Revolution, 1954
      [F1466.5]
      —Campaigns (Not Subd Geog)
        NT Gualán, Battle of, Gualán, Guatemala, 1954
    —Civil War, 1960-1996
    —1985-
Brazil – History – Revolution, 1964
BRAZIL’S 1964 COUP AND THE UNITED STATES

JFK with Lincoln Gordon, Ambassador to Brazil.
BEFORE THE 1964 COUP

1961 - Vice President João Goulart replaced former President Quadros

Goulart wanted reforms:

• economic and social
• Brazilian-based industrialization
• Agrarian reform
• Profit remittance limits
• Nationalization of foreign companies such as Hanna Mining.
MILITARY COUP ON APRIL 1, 1964

U.S.-backed coup overthrew democratically-elected Goulart.

Institutional Acts deprived citizens of rights.

- “Subversives” fired
- Political opposition, union leaders, peasant league workers, intellectuals, academics, military officers loyal to Goulart purged
- 10,000 people interrogated, 6,000 indicted, 4,500 expelled from service
- Political parties abolished
- Artificial parties created for appearances (Yes and Yes Sir!)
- Popular vote abolished
- Governors chosen by military regime
AFTERMATH

• 21 years of brutal dictatorship followed.

• Students, the clergy, unionists, parties on the left, and anyone suspected of opposing the dictatorship were arrested, tortured, and killed.
U.S. ROLE IN THE COUP

Recently released recordings of JFK and Johnson prove that the U.S. government, which disliked Goulart’s profit remittance limits and nationalization of Brazil’s resources, gave the green light for a military coup. The U.S. had already:

- Intervened heavily in Brazil’s affairs via CIA and USAID (Black 127-133, Green 19-48)
- Spent $5 million trying to prevent Goulart’s victory in congressional elections in 1962
- Paved the way for coup via organizations like IPES (Black 82-86) and IBAD (Black 76-77), a CIA front (Leacock 65).

Afterwards

CIA: “The change in government will create a greatly improved climate for foreign investments” (“The 1964 ‘Made in Brazil’ coup”).
U.S. ROLE IN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

- In Brazil “the police, drawing on training provided by the U.S., began routinely torturing political prisoners and even opened a torture school on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro to teach police sergeants how to inflict the maximum pain without killing their victims” (Langguth “U.S. has a 45-year History of Torture”).

- Dan Mitrione was sent by USAID’s Office of Public Safety to train Brazil’s police (Langguth Hidden Terrors).

- USAID funding, training, and personnel resulted in 100,000 police being trained “in the dark arts of rule-by-terror” (Ames).

- When reports of torture reached the U.S., American businesses* asked that hearings on this matter be closed because the reports “threatened their interests” (Green 241).

TORTURED BY THE DICTATORSHIP

Dilma Rousseff, Former President of Brazil

Frederick Morris, American pastor

Augusto Boal, theater director, creator of Theater of the Oppressed

Paulo Coelho, world renowned author

Marcos Arruda, Geologist, economist
TORTURED TO DEATH

- Chael Charles Schreier, medical student
- Maria Auxiliadora Lara Barcelos, medical student
- Stuart Angel, student
- Luiz Eduardo Merlino, journalist
- Tito de Alencar Lima, Dominican priest
- Marilena Villas Boas Pinto, psychology student
- Alexandre Vannucchi Leme, geology student
- Vladimir Herzog, journalist
Imprisoned: 50,000
Exiled: 5,000-10,000
Tortured: ≥ 10,000
Killed: ≥ 6,544
RESEARCHING LATIN AMERICA
“President João Goulart was overthrown because he was a Communist.”

-- Erin, April 2016

“Before the 1964 coup, Brazil was a Communist country.”

-- Brenna, May 2017

“Brazil’s Peasant Leagues were started by Communists.”

-- Miracle, May 2017
ANTI-COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA, 1964
“FOSSILIZED” PROPAGANDA

Exhibit A: Latin American reference handbook, 2008
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1964 military coup</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Military dictatorship**

João Goulart, deposed democratically-elected president

Military regime’s human rights abuses

U.S. support of Brazil’s dictatorship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1964 “Revolution”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Hardly surprising” / The only solution to Goulart’s presidency / Caused by “class conflict” and the need to “safeguard the country’s direction and development”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military “Republic”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Foolish” man / “ineffective leader” / Tried to steal from the elite and give to the poor / Tried to “mobilize the masses against the ruling class”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 vague mention

Completely omitted
After his Latin American Studies Ph.D., the author went straight to Wall Street . . .

. . . where he worked as an “investment strategist” for Latin America.

Now he is a Principal at Cambiar Global Select, specializing in “macroeconomic and policy research efforts” in Latin America (“Cambiar”).
FOSSILIZED PROPAGANDA

Exhibit B: Latin American studies encyclopedia
OMISSIÓN

- No index entries for:
  - CIA/USAID’s role in Brazil’s 1964 coup
  - Higher War College (Escola Superior de Guerra)
  - IPES (Instituto de Pesquisas e Estudos Sociais)
  - IBAD (Brazilian Institute for Democratic Action)
  - Operation Cleanup
  - Operation Condor
  - Operation Brother Sam
  - Torture used by regime
  - Torture in Brazil (report)
  - Vladimir Herzog
DISTORTION

Military coup

USAID’s repression training

Military move against Goulart

Acão Popular, largely peaceful activists

“Revolution”

“economic assistance”

“Goulart fled”

“guerilla group”
WHITIEWASHING

AI-5 (Institutional Act no. 5)

- Turned President into dictator
- Closed Congress
- Eliminated civil rights
- Eliminated habeus corpus
- Banned elections
- Banned unions
- Instigated massive censorship
- Imprisoned, tortured, and murdered civilians

“citizens’ political rights were canceled”
ONE CONTRIBUTING HISTORIAN

- Wrote glowing portraits about Brazil’s dictators.
- Claimed Goulart had “Communist allies” in labor unions.
- Claimed the public supported the military coup.
- Called the Left were “violence-minded” (363).
- Mocked the idea of U.S. imperialism (362).
- Disseminated lies about the threat Communism posed to Brazil (Maicon 131).
HIS EDUCATION

• B.A. in Philosophy
• M.B.A.
• B.S.c in Metallurgical Engineering

In 1959 – 1962, he served as Executive Vice President of Mineração Novalimense, part of the U.S. Hanna Mining Corporation
IN 1959, HE WAS SENT TO “ORGANIZE HANNA’S OPERATIONS IN BRAZIL.”
HANNA MINING & THE 1964 COUP

1961
• Brazil’s Congress investigated Hanna Mining’s claim to Brazil’s richest iron ore deposit.
• Goulart’s expropriation decree challenging Hanna’s claim was expected to pass Federal Court of Appeals.
• U.S. and Hanna Mining protested the decree.

1963
Hanna Mining funded a military conference at Arizona State University calling for an “anti-Communist counter-offensive in Latin America.”

1964
Hanna Mining provided trucks for troops who carry out the coup.
KEY FIGURES IN HANNA MINING

- **Herbert Hoover Jr.**, engineering consultant to Brazil, Undersecretary of State
- **George Humphrey**, Secretary of the Treasury under Eisenhower
- **John J. McCloy**, former president of the World Bank, chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, partner in Rockefeller-associated law firm

John J. McCloy
AFTER THE COUP

Hanna Mining’s McCloy led U.S. Ambassador Gordon to dictator Castelo Branco’s office to explain that restoring Hanna’s mining concession:

“might be a condition for receiving U.S. economic assistance” (Black 88).
MYSTERY HISTORIAN: JOHN W. F. DULLES

Son of John Foster Dulles
Fervent anti-Communist

Nephew of Allen Dulles
CIA Director
Fervent anti-Communist
“the U.S. government was able to manage the news to hide U.S. involvement in the coup and to present a skewed version of reality. . .The result was distorted reporting, which may have served short-term United States [corporate / financial / geopolitical] interests, but at the cost of misleading the public and perpetuating the cold war mentality.

This in turn, prevented a rational assessment of American foreign policy goals and perceptions, and may have resulted in further misconceptions concerning proper U.S. policies in the Third World, which resulted in a far greater blunder later in the decade that had disastrous consequences for the United States” (Weiss).
WHAT CAN LIBRARIANS DO?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Encourage students to evaluate reference sources as carefully as any other source.

“Authority is granted very lightly.”

-- Suzanne Schadl, President of SALALM, Professor/Librarian
“Authority Is Constructed and Contextual

...various communities may recognize different types of authority...

Experts view authority with an attitude of informed skepticism and an openness to new perspectives, additional voices, and changes in schools of thought. Experts understand the need to acknowledge biases that privilege some sources of authority over others...and to ask relevant questions about origins, context...while remaining skeptical of the systems that have elevated that authority and the information created by it” (ACRL).
IN THE CLASSROOM

Use examples to stimulate critical thinking:
• “Why would a reference book omit that important fact?”
• “Who wrote this and why? What are their associations?”
• “How can I find better information?”

Give “deep evaluation” assignments asking students to:
• analyze systems granting authority
• scrutinize authors’ backgrounds

Give Wikipedia improvement assignments
Chile’s 1973 coup and Nueva Canción
Nueva Canción entry in 2015

“There was a change of government... and Nueva Canción music fell out of favor.”
I revise the entry, adding facts

- U.S. involvement in coup
- Human rights abuses
- Victor Jara’s death
“In 1973, a Chilean coup d'état left Allende and several supporters dead.”
In 1973, the United States/CIA-backed right-wing military coup overthrew Allende’s democratic government, bombing the presidential palace, which killed Allende and others. Pinochet's forces then rounded up 5,000 civilians into two soccer stadiums for interrogation, torture, and execution. In a stadium-turned-prison Victor Jara was beaten, tortured, and his wrists were broken. After several days he was executed and shot 44 times. His wife Joan Jara writes, “where his belly ought to have been was a gory, gaping void.” Jara is the most well-known victim of a regime that killed about 30,000 people, “disappeared” at least 3,065, and tortured more than 38,000, bringing the number of victims to 40,018.
IN THE LIBRARY

• Analyze reference collections and weed, replace or supplement problematic texts with updated, more diverse perspectives.

• Write publishers and database vendors to push for updates and revisions to remove fossilized propaganda.
From: Winkale, Janet [mailto:Janet.Winkale@cenage.com]
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2017 9:32 AM
To: Kathy Swart <KSwart@piecex.ctc.edu>
Cc: Postman, Kimberley S <Kimberley.postman@cengage.com>
Subject: RE: GALE CUSTOMER: Another problematic entry - World History in Context

Dear Professor Swart,

Your email was forwarded to me because I am the content strategist for the World History in Context database, in which you found the article in question: “Brazil Stirs Dissent with Institutional Act Number 3, December 13, 1968.” As you note, this article was first published in Global Events: Milestone Events: Epigraphic History. For the editor of this title, there was an academic advisor for each volume who specialized in the history of the particular region; these advisors reviewed all articles to ensure accuracy and integrity.

The above being said, a number of our editors and history specialists took a closer look at the article and concluded that sentences should be revised to more directly state the role U.S. financial interests played in the 1964 coup. While this is implied in the article to some degree, it is agreed the point could be further developed.

Our editors are working on the revision now, and changes should be live in World History in Context in the next two weeks.

Thank you for reaching out to us. We do take your feedback and scholarship seriously. Please let me know if you have further questions or concerns.

Best,

Janet Winkale


My name is Kimberley and I am the Director of Sales for Gale covering accounts including Washington State.

I wanted to reach out to you to let you know that we received your feedback to Gale and thank you for taking the time to compile a detailed concern regarding Rousseff in the Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture. We immediately launched an internal investigation into your concern and hope to have a response available shortly.

I apologize for not immediately letting you know this however your concern was escalated quickly and is in the process of being addressed.

Kind regards,

Kimberley
REFERENCES


Arruda, Marcos. Personal Interview. 13 Feb. 2015


