**Use OF 502 Field**

The 502 field in MARC is for recording information on a thesis/dissertation. Current MARC documentation allows all information to be entered in subfield a, but also provides the option of entering discrete bits of information in several subfields. The subcommittee discussed whether there was value in requiring thesis/dissertation information to be formatted into the additional subfields available.

We currently have both formatted and unformatted 505 notes for table of contents coexisting in the catalog. There may be some advantage to formatted subfields that allow the table of contents to be searched by author keyword or by title keyword. However, all 505s are searchable by general keyword, whether formatted or not.

The subcommittee could not find a similar advantage for requiring a formatted 502. It’s doubtful that the subfield c containing the degree granting institution data will be brought under authority control. In most cases, the institution that grants the degree will be the only library that will have a record for the thesis or dissertation. And the 502 note is currently searchable by keyword even when unformatted.

Therefore, the subcommittee proposes that libraries may use either formatted or unformatted 502s. There is no need to change 502s in existing records. The new subfields of the 502 should be indexed along with the 502 subfield a.

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