



USING ScOT: GUIDELINES FOR INDEXERS
AND CATALOGUERS
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Amendment History

Date	Version	Comment	Person
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This document contains guidelines for using Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT) to describe educational resources. ScOT terms are entered into metadata and catalogue records. ScOT is available at <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au>

1 The subject indexing process

The subject indexing process involves:

- scanning the resource to determine the subject content
- assessing the predominant themes of the resource
- translating the themes into subject access points by selecting terms from a controlled vocabulary (e.g. ScOT)
- entering the subject terms in the bibliographic record using fields designated in the system's record structure to hold subject access points.

2 Principles and practices

Controlled vocabularies are used to provide subject access points in bibliographic records. Many collections, such as those held in libraries, use "subject headings", which are similar to thesauri. The Library of Congress Subject Headings is the best known example. A more local example that is familiar in the schools sector is the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS) Subject Headings. ScOT differs from subject headings such as these in structure and purpose.

2.1 Main differences between ScOT and subject headings

- In other vocabularies, some concepts are combined to form a single subject access point. In ScOT, concepts are entered as subject access points in their own right.

Subject heading approach:

Birds - Diseases; Frogs - Diseases

ScOT approach:

Birds; Frogs; Diseases

- Relationships among terms in ScOT are strongly defined and a distinct hierarchy is adhered to in the maintenance of the thesaurus. An awareness of this hierarchy will help you to use ScOT in cataloguing.

- ScOT is a collection of abstract concept types. ScOT terms describe *ideas* rather than *disciplines* – the latter are retained as non-preferred terms.

For example:

Tree rings
UF *Dendrochronology*

2.2 Element types

Relationship and other elements are displayed in abbreviated form. Acronyms displayed are:

UF	Used for
USE	Use
BT	Broader term
NT	Narrower term
RT	Related term
SN	Scope note
TNR	Term number

For an in-depth explanation of these relationships see the section on vocabularies, classifications and taxonomies in *Metadata usage in Australian and New Zealand education and training* (Standards Australia, 2007).

3 Searching ScOT

It is a good idea to search widely in ScOT to make sure that you find the best ScOT terms for the subject concepts you have identified.

3.1 Web interface

You can search ScOT via a web interface at <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au> (see Figure 1). Selecting a string search (terms that contain the search text) and a hierarchical display (see Figure 2) may present more useful information about ScOT terms than the default search options.

Alternatively, start your search by selecting one of the Top Terms.

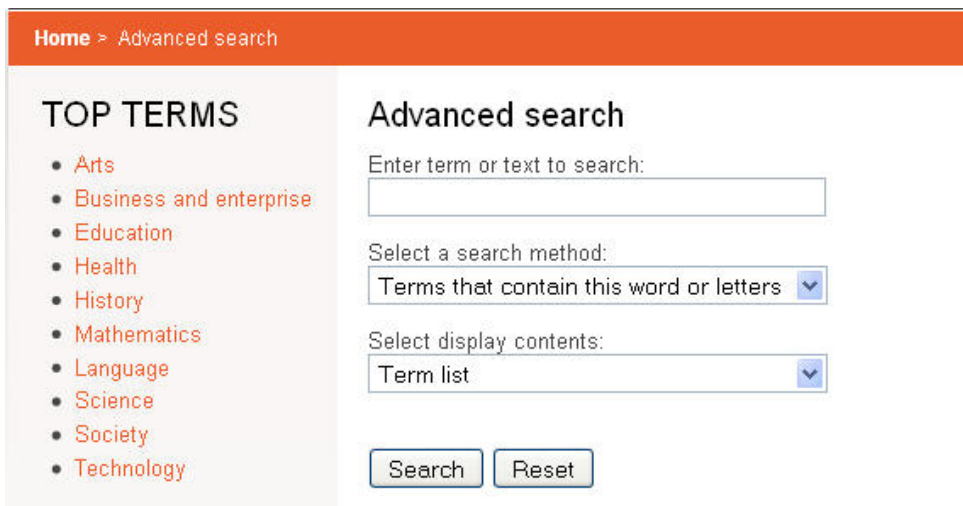


Figure 1 Search options

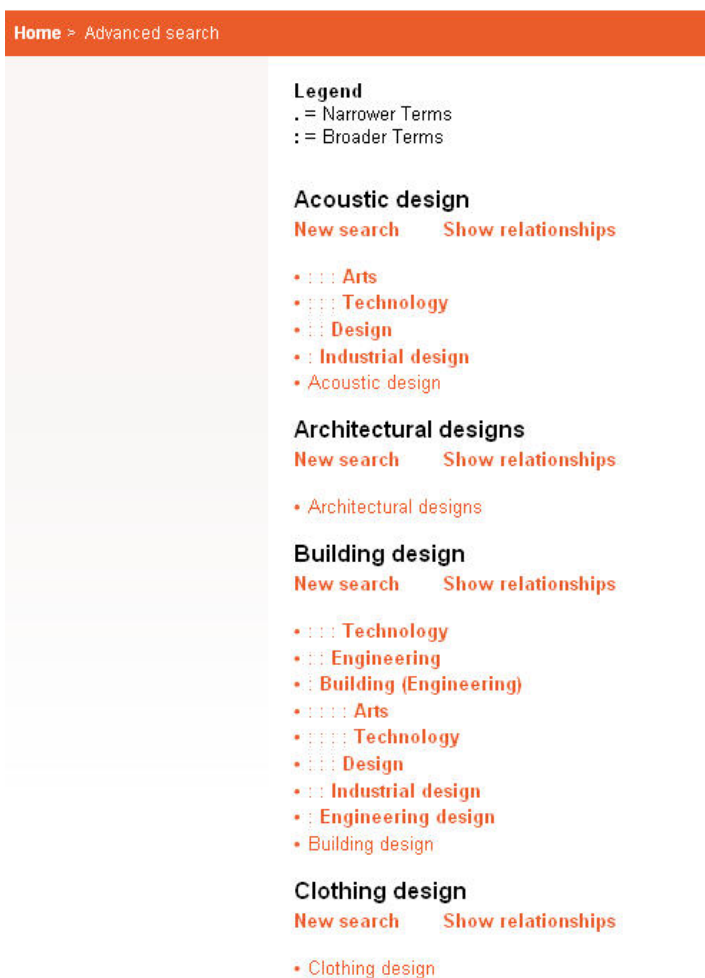


Figure 2 Terms containing word or letter "Design" displayed with broader and narrower term relationships

3.2 Windows application

Access ScOT terms with the ScOT Cataloguing tool, which can be downloaded at <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au/download.html>.

4 Assigning ScOT subject access points

4.1 Resources on several subjects

For resources on more than one subject treated separately, assign a ScOT term for each topic. (See examples 3 and 7 in Appendix.)

4.2 Resources on many related subjects

For resources that treat many related subjects separately assign one or more broad ScOT terms to represent the diverse subject content of the resource. (See example 9 in Appendix.)

4.3 Assigning broader and narrower subjects

Assign terms where another assigned term is a descendent is not recommended. Descendent terms are the narrow terms under another term (nt1, nt2, nt3, etc).

In the reference structure illustrated in the example below, neither 'Visual arts' nor 'Painting' should be assigned to a record where 'Oil painting' is assigned.

~~Visual arts~~

~~NT1: Painting~~

NT2: Oil painting

'Oil painting' is nt1 of 'Painting' and nt2 of 'Visual arts'. 'Sculpture' is at a higher level than 'Oil painting' but it is not its parent or grandparent. The relationship between 'Sculpture' and 'Oil painting' is analogous to that of uncle and nephew. Uncle–nephew terms may be assigned to the same record.

~~Visual arts~~

~~NT1: Painting~~

NT2: Oil painting

NT1: Sculpture

Because all ScOT terms have logical hierarchical relationships, the more specific term should always imply the broader terms above it. However the hierarchies are reviewed and subject to change. Use careful judgement and apply both narrower and broader terms if using the narrower term only does not adequately imply the broader concept for the indexed item. If assigning the most specific term only does not adequately imply the broader term, both may be selected for the record.

Note that "top terms" are rarely assigned to records. Top terms are terms that themselves have no broader terms, such as "Arts", "Mathematics" and "Science". Always consider a more specific term before assigning a top term.

4.5 Subjects not covered by ScOT

As with all controlled vocabularies, some subjects are not covered. They may be regarded as out of subject scope, ambiguous or too specific. For example, proper names are limited in ScOT. Such terms may enhance retrieval and should be entered into fields where the purpose is to record proper names. If no other fields are relevant, additional terms may be added into an uncontrolled keywords field. (See examples 8 in Appendix for a record with uncontrolled keywords.)

ScOT limits the number of compound descriptors and minimises terms representing events or occurrences. For more information, see the *ScOT Specifications* (Curriculum Corporation, 2006). The following categories of topic will not be added to ScOT:

- time periods
- literary awards and prizes (e.g. "Book of the Year Award")
- compound terms where the components can stand alone (e.g. "Hand in art", "Hindus in Australia", "Field crops and climate", "Flour and flour mills", "Women and Christianity")
- "language text" headings (e.g. "French language text")
- brand names (e.g. of cars, motorcycles, aeroplanes, computers)
- species of plants or animals, breeds of dogs, etc.

- individual legendary, mythical and fictional characters
- named events (e.g. "Battle of Trafalgar", "Newcastle earthquake")
- special days or years (e.g. "Mother's Day", "International Year of the Potato").

Where appropriate, assign a broader term from ScOT. For example, a resource about a Holden Commodore should be assigned the ScOT term "Cars", as there is no provision in ScOT to create additional terms for types of car.

When potential terms are identified that may represent subject gaps in school curriculum, please send feedback to scot@curriculum.edu.au.

5 References

Curriculum Corporation (2006). *Specifications for the Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT)*. Version 2.0; available: <http://www1.curriculum.edu.au/scis/partnerships/scotpapers.htm>

Curriculum Corporation (2009). *Metadata Application Profile: ANZ-LOM*. Available: <http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au/metadata>

Curriculum Corporation (2009). ScOT [Website]. Available: <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au>

Standards Australia (2007). *Metadata usage in Australian and New Zealand education and training*; available: <http://www.saiglobal.com/shop/script/Details.asp?DocN=AS0733782701AT>

6 Appendix

Dublin core examples

1.

```
<meta name="dc.title" content="Easy dressmaking techniques" />
<meta name="dc.subject" scheme="ScOT" content="Dressmaking" />
```

2.

```
<meta name="dc.title" content=" How to play cricket" />
<meta name="dc.subject" scheme="ScOT" content="Cricket (Sport)"
/>
```

3.

```
<meta name="dc.title" content="Cars, trucks, trains"/>
<meta name="dc.subject" scheme="ScOT" content="Cars; Trucks;
Trains" />
```

4.

```
<meta name="dc.title" content="Australia's whales, dolphins and
porpoises"/>
<meta name="dc.subject" scheme="ScOT" content="Whales; Dolphins;
Marine habitats" />
```

MARC 21 examples

5.

Title: What size is it?
Subjects: 650 _7 \$a Size. \$2 scot
650 _7 \$a Measurement. \$2 scot

6.

Title: Cansmart [website] : steel can recycling
Subjects: 610 27 \$a Steel Can Recycling Council. \$2 scot
650 _7 \$a Steel. \$2 scot
650 _7 \$a Containers. \$2 scot
650 _7 \$a Recycling. \$2 scot

7.

Title: Cars, trucks & trains
Subjects: 650 _7 \$a Cars. \$2 scot
650 _7 \$a Trucks. \$2 scot
650 _7 \$a Trains. \$2 scot

8.

Title: Fairness [chart] : Jane Saville, race walker, Athens
bronze medallist.
Subject: 650_7 |a Walking. |2 scisshl
650_7 |a Fairness. |2 scisshl
650_7 |a Books and reading. |2 scisshl
650_7 |a Walking. |2 scot
650_7 |a Athletics. |2 scot
650_7 |a Fair play. |2 scot
650_7 |a Books. |2 scot
653__ |a Race walking

ANZ-LOM examples

The Metadata Application Profile: ANZ-LOM is available from The Learning Federation website (Curriculum Corporation 2008).

9.

```
- <metadata>
  <schema>IMS Content</schema>
  <schemaversion>1.3</schemaversion>
- <lom xmlns="http://ltsc.ieee.org/xsd/LOM">
- <title>
  <string language="en">Life sciences</string>
</title>
- <description>
  <string language="en">Includes: organisation, origin and
diversity of life, cells, physiology, anatomy, reproduction,
genetics, heredity, evolution, ecosystems, behaviour,
biochemistry.</string>
  </description>
- <classification>
- <purpose>
  <source>LOMv1.0</source>
  <value>idea</value>
  </purpose>
- <taxonPath>
- <source>
  <string language="en">ScOT</string>
  </source>
- <taxon>
  <id>633</id>
- <entry>
  <string language="en">Life</string>
  </entry>
  </taxon>
  </taxonPath>
- <taxonPath>
  </classification>
```