Just How Open is Open Access?
Exposing Problematic Elements in bepress' Digital Commons Discipline Taxonomy for Institutional Repositories

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Goals of Open Access

1. To increase the visibility and impact of institutional research;
2. To make publicly funded research available to communities beyond the Academy;
3. To advance society through innovation;
4. And to facilitate equitable access to scholarly materials.

Berlin Declaration on Open Access

1. Unrestricted public access to "a complete version of the work and all supplemental materials;"

2. Without any meaningful copyright restrictions.

"… Not all open scholarship is treated equally.… Just because work is open doesn't mean that it will be found, valued, or validated… Open scholarship can and does replicate some of the biases inherent in academia and our society as a whole."

(Hathcock, 2016)

Agenda

1. Literature review
   a. Open Access publishing
   b. Critiques of classifications schemes

2. Selected critiques of the taxonomy
   a. Indigenous topics
   b. Religious topics
   c. LGBTQ+ topics
   d. Occidental-focused topics

3. So What? Now What?

Assumptions in Open Access discourse

1. Give the poor a computer and they will move from being information poor to information rich.
2. Information inequality is a North/South issue.
3. Access to more information enriches people's lives.
4. The 'information society' will be more democratic and participatory.
5. Given enough information we can solve all the world's problems.

(Burkett, 2000, p. 680)

"The assumption that the mere availability of information would lead to democracy is a myth. It is also a myth to think that…the Internet would lead to a levelling of asymmetric allocations of power."

(Herb, 2010)

"the architecture of classification schemes is simultaneously a moral and informatic task"

(Bowker & Star, 1999)

Inspiration for the bepress Discipline taxonomy

- Taxonomy of Research Doctoral Programs from the National Academies
- Classification of Instructional Programs, 2010 edition, from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)
- Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) from the National Library of Medicine
- Law subject headings are informed by the Current Index to Legal Periodicals (CILP) and FindLaw
- Several Business categories come from Cabell's
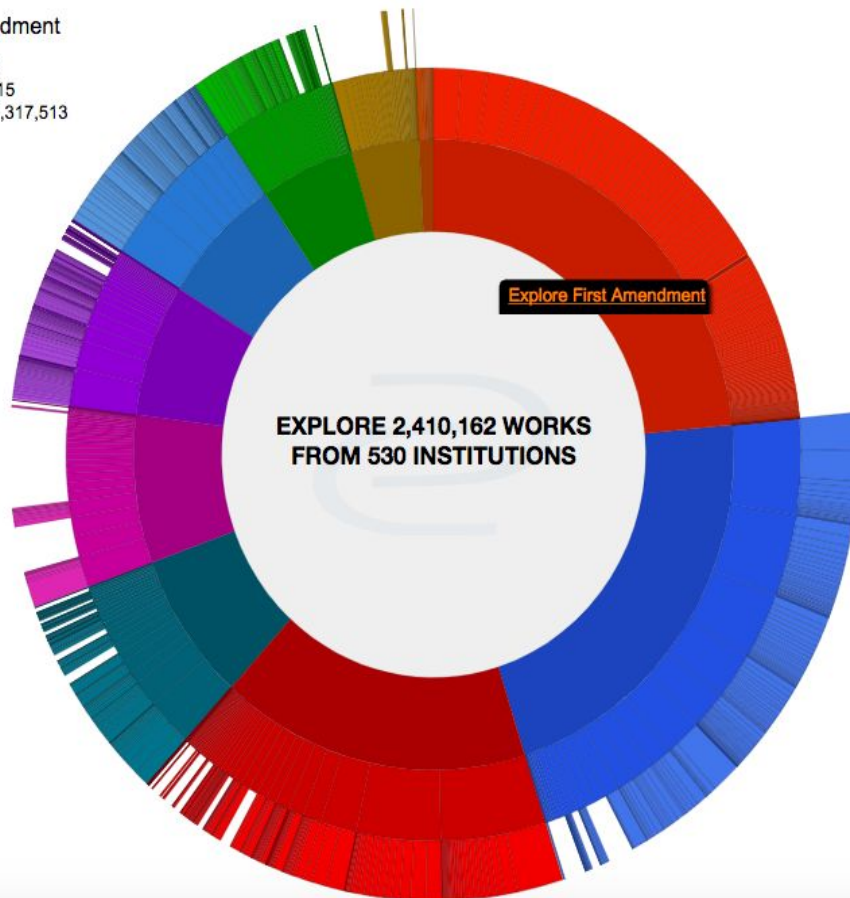- The University of California's list of departments and programs

Case Studies

1. Indigenous topics
2. Religious topics
3. LGBTQ+ topics
4. Occident-focused topics

Indigenous Topics

Dedicated Indigenous topics

Arts and Humanities
➜ Race, Ethnicity, and Post-Colonial Studies
  ➜ Indigenous Studies

Education
➜ Indigenous Education

Law
➜ Aboriginal and Indian Law

Indigenous topics found in instead...
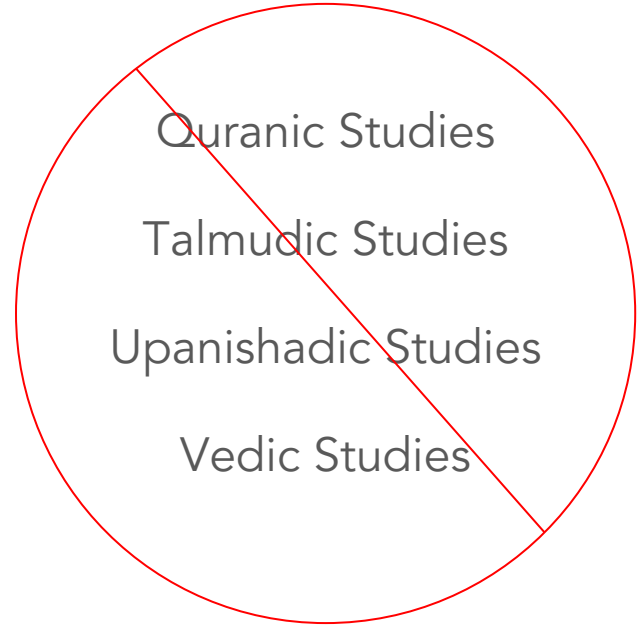
Canadian History

Multicultural Psychology

Social and Cultural
   Psychology

Other Anthropology

Other Sociology

Other Religion

Religious Topics

Biblical Studies

Quranic Studies

Talmudic Studies

Upanishadic Studies

Vedic Studies

Catholic Studies

Mormon Studies

Christian denominations and sects

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Common divisions of other religions

Smaller religions

LGBTQ+ Topics

Inconsistency with LGBTQ+ topics

Arts and Humanities: Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Social and Behavior Sciences
➔ Communication
  ➔ Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity

Sociology
➔ Gender and Sexuality
➔ Race and Ethnicity

Occident-Focused Topics

Arts and Humanities: African Languages and Societies

Arts and Humanities: American Studies

Arts and Humanities: American Studies: American Film Studies

Arts and Humanities: American Studies: American Literature

Arts and Humanities: American Studies: American Material Culture

Arts and Humanities: American Studies: American Popular Culture

Arts and Humanities: American Studies: Other American Studies

Arts and Humanities: English Language and Literature

Arts and Humanities: English Language and Literature: Children's and Young Adult Literature

Arts and Humanities: English Language and Literature: Literature in English, Anglophone outside British Isles and North America
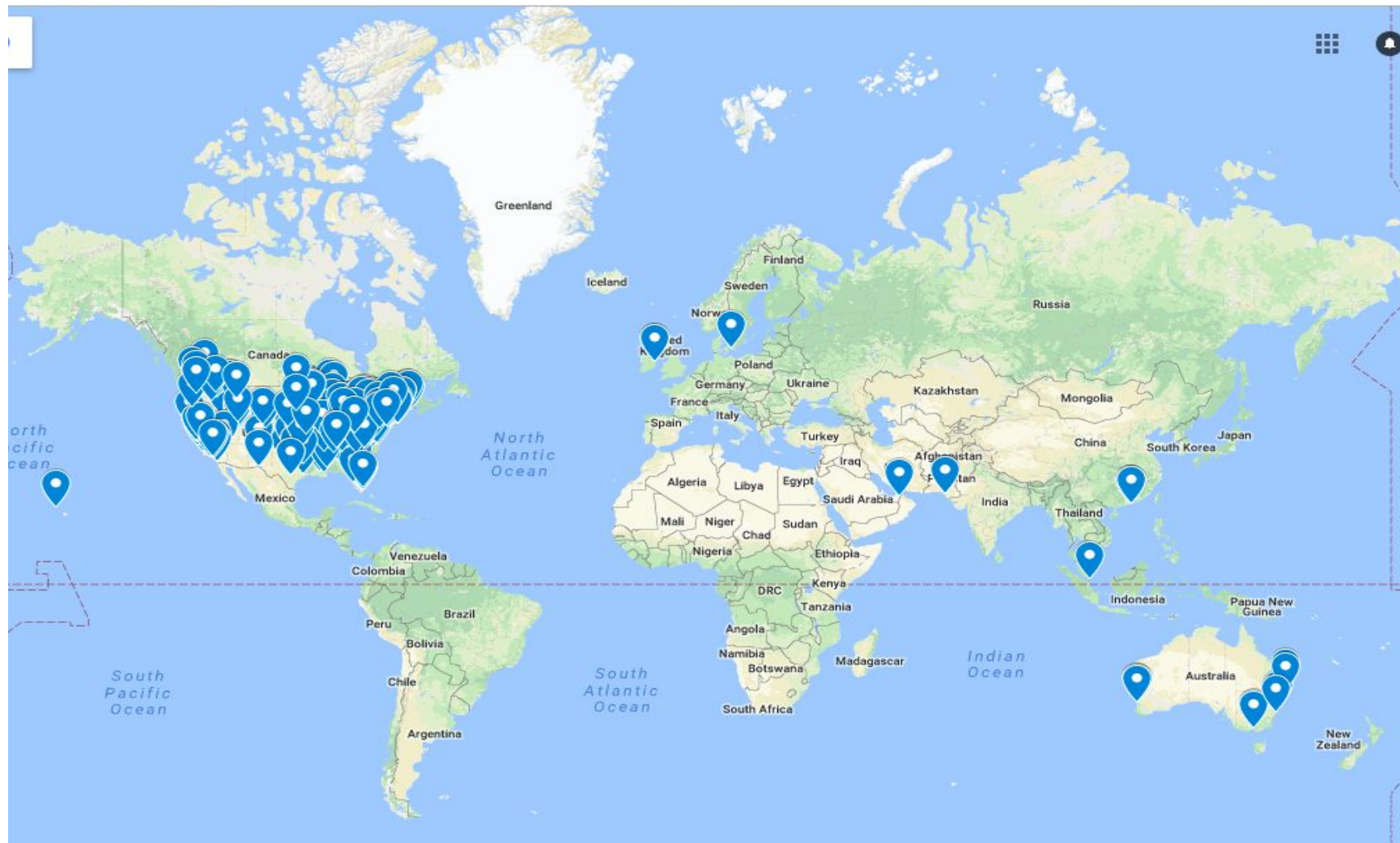
Arts and Humanities: English Language and Literature: Literature in English, British Isles

Arts and Humanities: English Language and Literature: Literature in English, North America

Arts and Humanities: English Language and Literature: Literature in English, North America, Ethnic and Cultural Minority

Arts and Humanities: English Language and Literature: Other English Language and Literature

Why shouldn't works by/about minoritized groups be given the same discoverability benefits as works by and/about topics with a majority focus?

When will time, cost, and effort cease to be an excuse for perpetuating archaic, discriminatory systems?

Questions?

Please feel free to contact us!

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