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Planning and Management of Authority Control in the Brazilian National Foundation of Arts

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Created in 1975, the Brazilian National Foundation of Arts is an agency of the Brazilian Federal Government, whose mission is to promote and encourage the production, practice, and dissemination of Arts. This agency is also responsible for federal public policies in this area.

To fulfill these goals and to preserve its history, Funarte maintains the Documentation and Research Center (CEDOC), which preserves special collections composed by multimedia including iconographic, sound, textual, and audiovisual items.

These information sources are unique. Besides being a special information center in theatre, photography, dance, circus, music, opera, plastic, and graphic arts, CEDOC has the function to manage Funarte's archive.



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To improve its management, a partnership was established with the Information Science Department of Fluminense Federal University to develop methodologies for organization, retrieval, and preservation of CEDOC's collections. The focus was on the improvement of information access regarding this cultural heritage whose users are public managers, researchers, artists, and students.

AUTHORITY CONTROL

Funarte Authority Lists are composed by terms which were used in the cataloging and indexing of CEDOC's bibliographic and archival collections, to assign access points that will be used in information search and retrieval.

These Lists contain the forms of names of **people, institutions, events, topic terms, and uniform titles** related to Arts in Brazil.

Funarte does not have its own controlled vocabularies.

RESEARCH DESIGN

- Motivation:** Difficulties described by CEDOC managers regarding authority control.
- Question:** How can Funarte Authority Lists be reviewed in order to promote authority control and consistency?
- Goal:** To present the results of the application of a review method to the terms that compound Funarte Authority Lists.

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical dimension:

- Literature review (Andrade 2015, Cintra et al. 2002, Lara 2004, Lara 2007, Martínez Tamayo 1997, Smit 2013, Wiederhold and Reeve 2021)

Applied dimension:

- Qualitative research with inductive method
- **Main steps:**
 1. Diagnosis
 2. Method design
 3. Elaboration of indicators

Based on a diagnosis developed through meetings with CEDOC managers, retrieval tests at the library catalog, and formulation of research questions, the problems that led them to request a review of the Authority Lists were comprehended.

The following absences were detected:

- Vocabulary control at the input of the system;
- Controlled vocabularies;
- Indexing policy.

Problem-generator contexts:

- Authority lists have many homonyms, similar terms and, for a long time, they did not have cross references;
- Mass migration of terms assigned as main entries at the catalog records to fields 100 and 150 of MARC21.

Analysis also pointed out problems regarding the classification of the terms in the Lists.

For instance, there are:

- a large number of terms in the Name Authority List which are not personal names, but names of institutions, events, projects, programs, topic terms;
- typos;
- variant forms of a name without establishing cross reference (full names, abbreviations, use of uppercase, lowercase) etc.

Once the scenario was explained, the goals of this review were:

1. Identify attributes of the terms in order to contextualize them at the collections;
2. Analyze the accuracy of the classification of the terms in the Lists;
3. Identify occurrences that can be duplicities, homonyms, or possible equivalences;
4. Identify terms that can be classified in more than one List; and
5. Offer recommendations for handling adjustments and exclusions of terms.

For the review process, an analysis matrix was built from the modeling of Excel spreadsheets that contained the seven Authority Lists, their terms, and codes. Eight undergraduate students from **Library Science** and **Archival Science** worked at this task for four months. Each student reviewed approximately 80 terms, in five hours of daily work, five days a week.

The first question answered was:

Are there other occurrences of the term in the Name Authority List?

The goal was to identify semantic, syntactic, and typographic variations of each one of the 61.748 terms.

Establishing equivalences between terms referring to people requires a careful context analysis.

The next question was:

Is the term also included in other Funarte Authority List?

The term was searched in all Authority Lists available at the analysis matrix: Institution, Event, Uniform title, Geographical, Chronological, and Topic term.

The third question was:

Are there other possibilities of equivalences that are not included in the Funarte Authority Lists?

This question aimed to identify other possibilities of designation forms, solve doubts, and identify ambiguities through searches in information sources, e.g.: Virtual International Authority File, special encyclopedias, dictionaries etc.

With the results of the analysis, the team members pointed out whether the term could be a candidate for exclusion from the Name Authority List.

Exclusions were recommended in cases of typos, if the term had a correct equivalence in the List, as well as terms that compound the Name Authority List but are not personal names, such as: names of plays, theater groups, theater companies, theaters, dates, movie titles, associations, personal collections etc.

The next step involved adjustments when there were problems related to spelling or completeness of the personal name, e.g.: “A., Estevan A.” was adjusted to “Silveira, Estevan Alexandre”.



A	B	C
Term	Code	Occurrences
Fernandes, Millôr, 1923-2012	6592	Fernandes, Millôr (3077)
		FERNANDES, MILLOR, adapt (21327)
		FERNANDES, MILLOR, aut (21330)
		FERNANDES, MILLOR, trad (14751)
		Gôgo, Vão (31841)
		Millôr (32971)
Fernandes, Raimundo Alberto Guedes (Raimundo Alberto Guedes Fernandes)	44335	Fernandes, Raimundo Alberto Guedes (2157)
Fernandes, Sebastião, 1902-	67243	Fernandes, Sebastião (6559)
Fernandes, Sílvia	7363	Telesi, Sílvia Fernandes (257)
Fernandes, Silvino (Sivino Fernandes)	32799	Fernandes, Silvino (67247)
Fernandes, Vera Fróes, 1955-	67254	Froes, Vera (42687)

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

A new spreadsheet was generated to shed light to the occurrences of the term in the Name Authority List. The term was kept in column A, followed by its code in column B, and the occurrences – and their codes – in column C.

So, occurrences were registered in the relationship from A to C. It was necessary to pay attention to the terms that have different designation forms even when there was a distance regarding the alphabetical order.

A	B	C
Term	Code	Occurrences
Hollanda, Chico Buarque de, 1944-	7975	Buarque, Chico (97)
		BUARQUE, CHICO (ADAPT.) (71726)
		Buarque, Chico, 1944- (3021)
		Holanda, Chico Buarque de (2263)
		Holanda, Chico Buarque de, 1944- (28496)
		Holanda, Francisco de (14607)
		Hollanda, Chico Buarque de (7973)
		Hollanda, Francisco Buarque de (75028)

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

From this step, it was possible to identify terms with different designation forms, but with the same meaning, and terms with the same and similar designation forms, that is, syntactic, spelling, or typographic variations of the same term.

Reviewing Authority Lists which have already been used in cataloging records brings challenges.

Insertion, exclusion, or adjustment of any term must consider the impacts that will be caused at the cataloging records that have them as access points.

It demands an analysis regarding the designation form of the term; analysis of the number of occurrences from the term; number of documents retrieved at the catalog; establishment of differences by verifying attributes and deciding whether the term is considered a duplicity or an equivalence.

The establishment of **relationships** between terms corresponding to the Funarte authorities would improve semantic and syntactic relationships among the items of CEDOC's collections. In this way, the possibilities of meaning and a reliable information retrieval are strengthened.

An important point to be investigated concerns the establishment of **equivalences** between terms, especially regarding Name Authority Headings. Beyond the pseudonyms, names in Arts domain have special features.

After the review, the following indicators were generated:

Indicator	Terms
Funarte authority database	85.223
Reviewed terms of the Name Authority List	61.748
Terms that have 1 to 8 occurrences	5.398
Occurrences (variant forms or equivalent terms at Name Authority List)	6.913
Terms which are part of the Name Authority List identified in other Funarte Lists	703
Occurrences identified in other Funarte Lists from the 703 terms	1.020
Recommendation of exclusion of terms at Name Authority List	8.836
Recommendation of adjustment of terms at Name Authority List	897

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

MAIN RESULTS

- Identification of terms which were considered appropriate in accordance with the authority control standards, and construction and use of KOS;
- Identification of the necessary attributes to contextualize the authorities in cataloging records, such as:
 - a. insertion of the date of birth, or date of birth and death;
 - b. adoption of standards for designation forms;
 - c. standardization of typographic forms, use of upper and lower cases, primary language etc.
- Identification of terms whose adjustment or exclusion were recommended;
- Identification of duplicities, homonyms, and equivalent terms.

The review carried out outlined important features of the Funarte Authority Lists.

A management tool was elaborated to enable that adjustments can be proceed in a standardized and controlled way by CEDOC managers.

In this way, this review brings elements to the development of methods for obtaining consistent authority records, as well as for the construction of KOS.

Regarding authority control, the method relies on the evaluation of Funarte authorities identifying variant forms, and duplicities as consequences of typo, classification of the same term in different lists, e.g.: presence of the same term in the Institution List and in the Event List without distinguishing attributes.

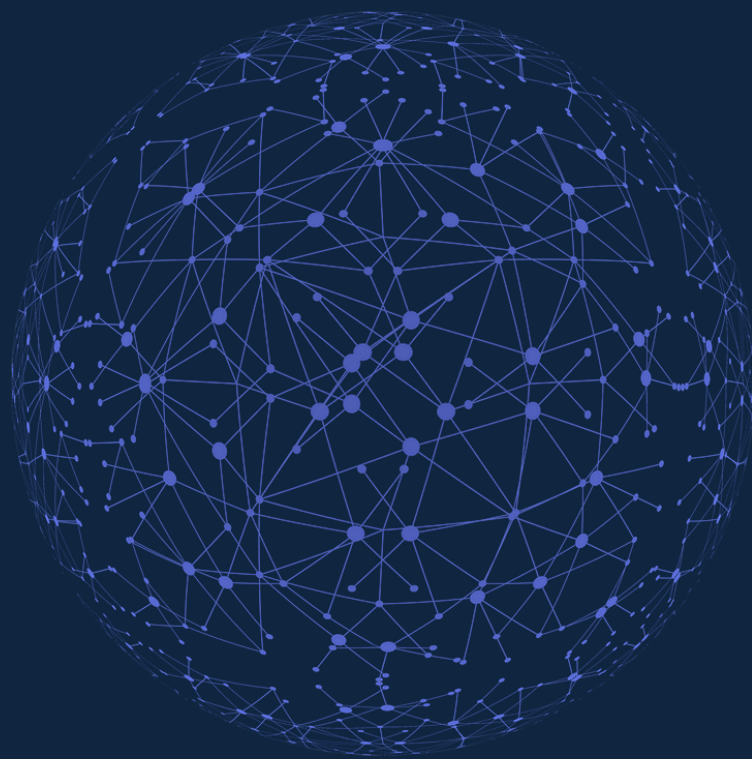
Homonyms terms and related terms were evaluated, and recommendations for adjustment, reclassification in the proper List, and exclusion were proposed to CEDOC.

Regarding KOS, it is considered that the method allows the establishment of semantic relationships between terms, which constitutes one of their main features.

Starting from the identification of variant forms – from the perspective of Cataloging – or equivalence relationships – in the Knowledge Organization scope – it is possible to analyze terms’ hierarchy and association to expand the possibilities of communication between people, systems, and documents.



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Many theoretical questions arose from this method planning and management. Some of them were solved during the process, others required analysis of the collection and/or meetings with CEDOC managers, and some of them must be investigated.

At this time, we are thinking about whether this kind of terms mapping involves interoperability between different languages as postulated by ISO 25964-2:2011. In the case of Funarte authorities, terms came from natural language and from other KOS (without references).

Thus, considering that authority control can work as a starting point for the elaboration of Funarte KOS, improvements to information representation, organization, retrieval, and access to CEDOC's collections can be promoted.

Funarte is an information network about Arts in Brazil, and its Authority Lists would be important information sources related to local and global scenarios of Arts.



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THANK YOU!

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