

# Enhancing Access to ETD Catalog Records

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## Introduction

Librarians continue to debate how best to provide access to ETDs beyond the basic access points of author and title.

A study of ETD cataloging practices of the 114 Association of Research Libraries (ARL) academic libraries was conducted to discern how they provide access to the following:

- Academic departments of the authors
- Names of advisors and committee members
- Subject content of the ETDs

## Methods

*ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global* was searched to find dissertations completed in 2013 at each of the 114 institutions.

Ten dissertation titles from each university were searched in that institutions' library catalog, and cataloging practices were analyzed.

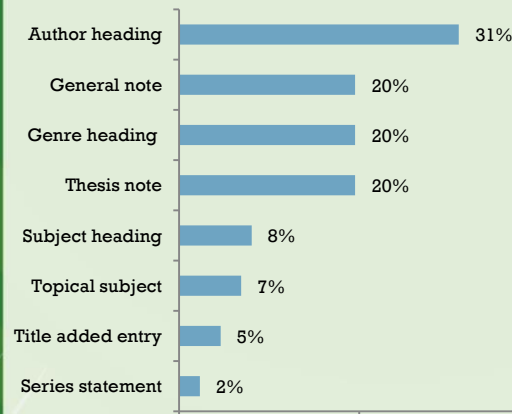
The resulting sample for this study consisted of 87 ARL libraries that cataloged ETDs with MARC records.

Some of the ARL libraries did not catalog ETDs, and provided access to them only through institutional repositories and/or *ProQuest*.

A green light to greatness.

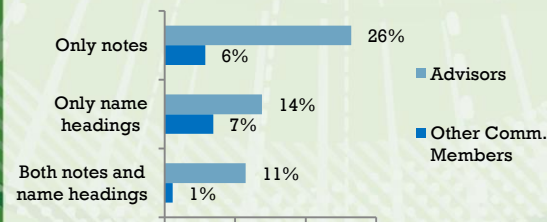
## Academic Departments

**86% (n=75) of the catalogs provided access to names of departments, colleges, schools or disciplines** through one or more of the following fields.



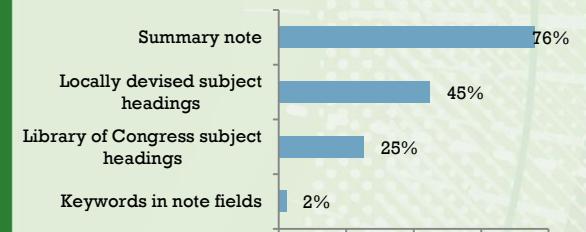
## Advisors

**52% (n=45) of the catalogs provided access to names of advisors, while 14% (n=12) provided access to names of other committee members.**



## Subjects

**87% (n=76) of the catalogs provided access to subjects** through notes or subject headings.



## Conclusions

Notes were used more often than formal headings to provide access to department names, advisors' names, and subjects. Many cataloging departments save time by creating notes rather than constructing formal headings. The trend to streamline ETD cataloging in response to budget constraints was documented by Hoover (2002), and continues to grow.

Catalogers should consult with other library staff whenever they make decisions about the content of ETD records. Reference librarians and IT staff may offer their insights into patron information seeking behavior. Reference and instruction librarians also need to understand how the coding of an ETD catalog record will affect information retrieval.

Acknowledgment: Hoover, L. (2002) "Cataloging theses and dissertations." *Technical Services Quarterly*, 19(3), 21-39.