

Visualizing Library of Congress Subject Headings

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The challenge of academic libraries in the digital age is not just in encouraging students to retrieve books on the shelves but how to entice them to browse the stacks in general. In 2008, California State University, Channel Islands' Broome Library designed custom, large-scale (53" x 35") graphics that visualize the Library of Congress Subject Headings throughout its stacks. Signage includes call letters coupled with a detail of a famous work of art that reflects the subject heading and functions as a visual cue for patrons. For example: Andy Warhol's *Details of Renaissance Painting* was used for N-Art and Leonardo DiVinci's *Vitruvian Man* for Q-Science. We choose to remove any heading from the graphics that were not actively represented within our collection, decluttering and improving the visual literacy. The large graphics were then printed on PVC and fixed within the stacks viewable from all vantage points. We effectively increase circulation by enticing students into the stacks with highly visible, colorful and contemporary graphics that provide them with the information necessary to locate a specific book or browse. Visiting librarians from around the country have been inspired to revisit the way in which they display their call numbers in the highly visual culture of our digital world.