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## We Found the ANSCR! An Innovative Solution to Store and Showcase Media Collections

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# We Found the ANSCR!:

## An innovative solution to store and showcase media collections

### Context

During summer 2018, my library closed for renovation. Aside from managing the demands of a building project, such as planning, preparing, and staging operations offsite, we had to cut media storage in half. Our challenge grew into a positive outcome: media moved into a more visible, accessible location. Previously, CDs were crammed into a staff-only storage area.



Figs. 1 – 4. Images of our CD collection prior to the ANSCR project

### What is ANSCR?

Developed in the 1960s, ANSCR stands for Alpha-Numeric System for Classifying Recordings<sup>1</sup>. It was intended for public library collections, where recordings were often kept in open stacks. The chart below explains how each ‘term’ is built, creating a unique call number for each recording. We added a “term five” to include original accession numbers for each disc.

| STRUCTURE OF THE ANSCR CLASS NUMBER                          |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Terms  | Formation  | Function                                     |
| <b>Term One</b><br>(B—Opera Category)                        | Alphabetical letter or letters representing an ANSCR category.   | To group related recordings.                 |
| <b>Term Two</b><br>(PUCC—Puccini)                            | First four consecutive letters of a name or word.  | To arrange the recordings within a category. |
| <b>Term Three</b><br>(ML—Manon Lescaut)                      | First letters of first three key words of a title, or first three consecutive letters of a one word title. | To identify a work title or an album title.  |
| <b>Term Four</b><br>(T—Tebaldi, soprano)<br>(17—London 1317) | First letter of a performer's surname, followed by last two digits of commercial record number.            | To make the class number unique.             |

class number: B, PUCC, ML, T 17

### What worked well?

- User discovery has improved and new setup has been well-received
- Item records were cleaned up
- We were able to identify areas for growth and eliminate duplicates
- We provided a ‘pilot’ for Kelvin Smith Library staff interested in a similar project



Fig. 7. Browsing liner notes

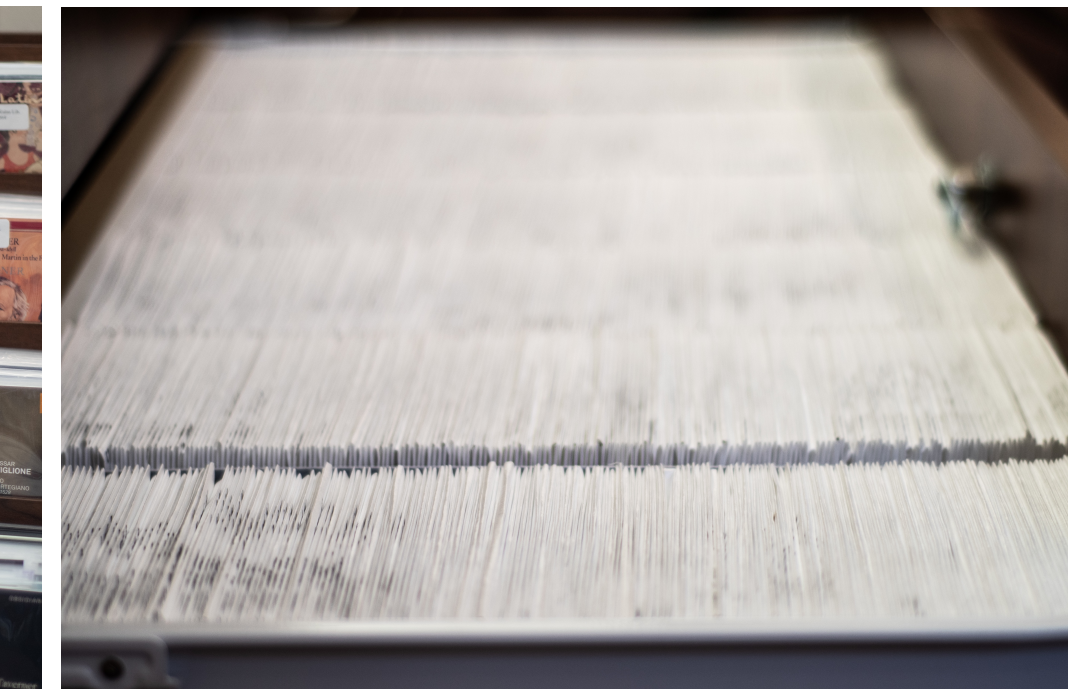


Fig. 8. CD discs in drawer

### Why ANSCR?

ANSCR groups items by genre, making them browser-friendly. Previously, our CDs were in accession order, which was not suitable once items moved into open space.

I saw ANSCR in action at another library, where users could browse liner notes in the lobby (see left picture below). Staff would retrieve discs from behind the desk.

At Kulas, discs were placed into Tyvek sleeves and stored underneath liner notes in accession order. Liner notes were made browsable on top using the ANSCR system.

Users can now search by category and see which titles, composers, and performers fall side-by-side in our collection. They can also use the online catalog to locate sound recordings.



Fig. 5. Liner notes on display at the Fennell Music Library, Interlochen Center for the Arts



Fig. 6. Liner notes on display at Kulas Music Library, Case Western Reserve University

### How did we do it?

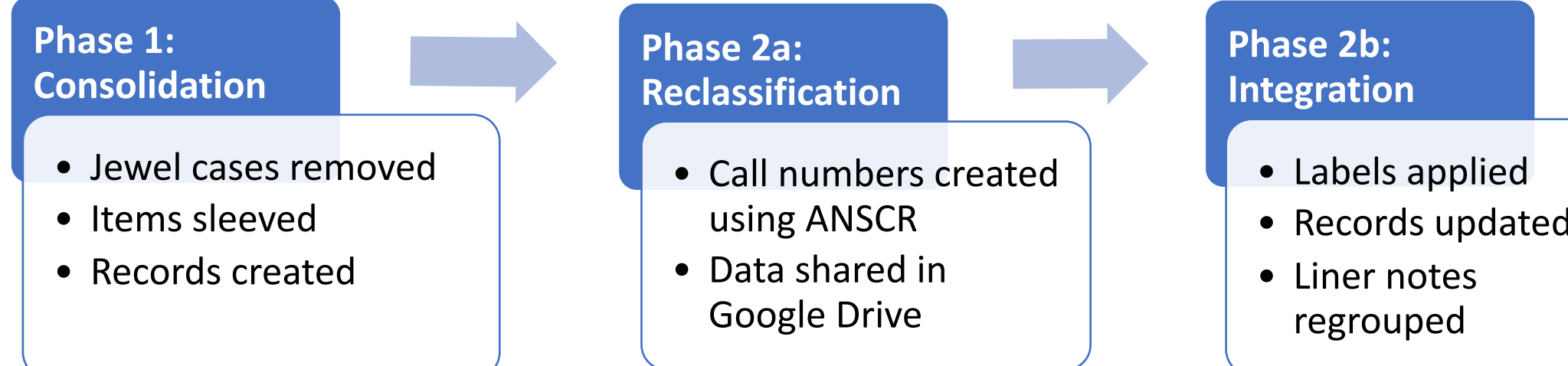


Table 1. Summary of general ANSCR categories. Categories E, G, and M have multiple sub-categories not shown

| Letter | Category           | Letter | Category        | Letter | Category      |
|--------|--------------------|--------|-----------------|--------|---------------|
| A      | Music Appreciation | J      | Electronic      | T      | Plays         |
| B      | Operas             | K      | Musicals        | U      | Poetry        |
| C      | Choral             | L      | Soundtracks     | V      | Prose         |
| D      | Vocal              | M      | Popular         | W      | Documentary   |
| E      | Orchestral         | P      | Folk (national) | X      | Instructional |
| F      | Chamber            | Q      | Folk (int'l)    | Y      | Sounds        |
| G      | Solo Instrument    | R      | Holiday         | Z      | Children      |
| H      | Band               | S      | Humor           |        |               |

### What were the challenges?

- Different working styles / consistency in applying ANSCR rules
- Oversize and odd-shaped items
- Content that did not fit neatly into any category
- Time, budget, and work space needs



Fig. 9 – 11. Oversize and duplicate items

### What would we do differently?

- Start sooner
- Inventory the collection first
- Request additional staff support
- Create additional sub-categories
- Check for duration field (MARC 306) in item records
- Document additional term 2s created during the process
- Modify more rules as needed to fit the needs of a research collection

As McKnight observed<sup>2</sup>, libraries frequently modify existing schemes for their own needs. Classifying recordings is difficult because they are often collections of different works. No single category can accommodate all content on a disc.



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### References

1. Saheb-Ettaba, Caroline and Roger B. McFarland, *ANSCR; the Alpha-numeric system for classification of recordings*, Williamsport, PA: Bro-Dart, 1969.
2. McKnight, Mark. *Music Classification Systems*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2002.