

Tagging Guidelines for using the openfamilyservices.org.uk vocabulary

Produced by OpenFamilyServices

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For use by Local Authorities who contribute to the OpenFamilyServices Directory.

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1 Introduction

These tagging guidelines have been created to help people understand how to use the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary.

By tagging we mean adding a 'keyword' to a piece of content. For example, there may be a service called 'Summer Fun' which is about providing activities for children in the summer holidays. 'Summer Fun' isn't necessarily something that parents would know to search for, so by adding keywords such as 'play' and 'things to do' and so on, it makes it easier for parents to find what they are looking for. The vocabulary has been specifically developed to reflect the language that parents use.

The vocabulary has been developed to support the description, organisation and management of information content about services so that the users (parents and practitioners) can search for and find content more easily and accurately.

The OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary has been produced through an analysis of websites, other vocabularies, relevant documents and search logs, plus workshops and interviews with parents and practitioners. This has been done in an iterative way and has focused very much on the needs and interests of parents themselves. Parents were involved in the construction and the user testing of several different draft versions of the vocabulary.

2 Purpose of the Vocabulary

The purpose of the vocabulary is to provide a list of terms that can be used to tag information content about services that are relevant to parents and practitioners. The vocabulary can also be used as the basis for creating an online (or even paper) directory. For example, all of the top level terms and the level 2 terms could be used as part of the information architecture for an online resource about services for parents. During the consultation period of producing the vocabulary, a number of organisations said they found it a useful guide and checklist to clearly identify the range of services they are providing and where there might be gaps and omissions. The vocabulary was not created with this intended purpose but it seems to be a useful by-product of the process.

3 Benefits

There are four key benefits of using the vocabulary:

- It will make it easier for users to find information about services (by browsing)
- It will help users to search for information (through a search engine)
- it will make it easier to organise that information;
- it will provide a consistency of description.

The vocabulary has been designed to reflect the language and interests of the end users - the parents and practitioners who will be looking for information about services. How does this work in practice?

Tagging content is a way of helping to organise and structure that content. For example, if a service is tagged with 'behavioural problems' and the user is looking for services relating to 'behavioural

problems' then they will have a much better chance of finding this. Tagging content also makes it easier for content to be managed because it helps the provider of a service understand the coverage of service provision. Through encouraging all local authorities to adopt the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary for tagging, a consistency will be created. This means that users only have to learn how to use one system to get the benefit of information from many systems. For example, while most users will be searching for information at a local level, there are many instances when people need to find information from sources beyond their geographic region.

The OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary is a “ready-made” vocabulary, and can be used as is. A significant benefit will be consistency of content description across all local authorities. Users in particular will benefit from knowing that a given word (e.g., “adoption”) means exactly the same thing no matter which local authority they are approaching for information. There will be no ambiguity of meaning.

4 The Structure of the Vocabulary

The vocabulary has the following structure:

- 19 Top Level Headings
-Level 2 terms
-Level 3 terms
-non-preferred terms

The 19 top level headings are the main subjects that have been identified as being relevant to parents. Each of the top level subject headings then includes a list of relevant keywords. Each of these sets of keywords is then further segmented into more specific keywords.

The vocabulary is a polyhierarchy which means that the same term can be in different places. For example, the term 'adoption' is in the main top level headings of Children and Families - Being a Parent or Carer. It means the same thing in the different places. Where terms exist that look the same but have different meanings, they include a qualifier term in brackets. For example, the term 'smoking' appears in different places in the vocabulary but means slightly different things. There is 'smoking (fire hazard)'; this is a safety issue. There is 'smoking (teenagers)' which would relate to teenagers and smoking.

An important point to note is that many of the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary terms are mapped directly to terms contained in the IPSV vocabulary (version 2.0). In the current **version 3.0**, the IPSV terms are actually contained within our vocabulary. The IPSV terms can be identified easily because their term “identifiers” are in a different format from those terms unique to the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary (IPSV terms have numeric identifiers, while those for OPENFAMILYSERVICES are alpha-numeric). The fact that the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary has been mapped in this way should reduce the tagging burden for those organisations which have already tagged content using the IPSV. Content which has been tagged with an IPSV term, and where that term is contained within the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary, does not require to be re-tagged: the existing tagging will still work.

In **version 4.0** of our vocabulary, which will be released and implemented with the agreement of all contributing Local Authorities, the IPSV terms have been removed from the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary. The mapping between the two vocabularies is now held as an external new vocabulary. You do not need to use this “mapping vocabulary”. If your records contain IPSV terms as tags from the previous version of the vocabulary, your records will still upload and be searchable: the

aggregator will automatically generate a report advising you to replace these IPSV terms with ones from our own vocabulary.

5 Terminology

There are a few terms that are useful to understand when tagging. These include:

Metadata

Metadata can be described as 'extra' data about an information resource that is not necessarily implicit in the resource itself. Metadata can apply to a range of objects and concepts. For example, without clear labels, it is impossible to tell whether a can contains tomato soup or cat food. The term 'tomato soup', a list of the ingredients, the sell by date, how to heat the soup up and for how long - these are all examples of metadata. The soup itself does not contain any information about when it needs to be eaten by - that extra data has to be clearly described. If the label falls off the can, then the only way to find out about the contents would be to open it.

Another example of metadata is a television guide. It provides information about start and end times of programmes, the title and a brief summary of what the programme is about. This helps the viewer select content to watch rather than just watching the same channel hoping something entertaining eventually comes up, or channel hopping.

Controlled vocabulary

A controlled vocabulary is a list of words in which the order of the words, the words themselves and the meaning of the words are all controlled through a set of rules. There are two main controls; the syntax (how the vocabulary is structured) and the semantic rules (how meaning is determined). There are many different examples of controlled vocabularies; a thesaurus is an example, as is a classification scheme, or a library catalogue (that enables user to search thousands of books by titles, authors, date of publication and on a range of broad subjects - 'what the book is about'). The OPENFAMILYSERVICES is a controlled vocabulary in that a set of rules have been used to create it and it will be developed and maintained through the interaction of the end users of the vocabulary and an editorial team. In practice this means terms within the vocabulary will not change without discussion and agreement.

Metadata elements

When metadata is used in information systems (as opposed to describing cans or television programmes) it consists of a range of elements or fields. Example fields could be the name of the creator of the content, the date it was created, or a brief description of what it is about or all of these fields. For the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary, the terms are intended to be used to tag the 'subject'. What is the content about? Is it about 'adoption' or is about 'drug use and misuse'? A service or subject could cover two or three or more concepts and therefore one can tag the content to more than one level 2 term or level 3 term.

Tagging

Tagging is the actual physical process of adding a word from the vocabulary to information that describes a service. For instance, if the service is about behavioural problems, then that would be the term to 'tag' with. How the physical tagging is actually implemented will be determined by the information system that is being used.

6 Recommended Terms to Use

It is recommended that tagging is done at a minimum with the level 2 terms for all content and level 3 terms where appropriate. If you are able to access the metadata records associated with the terms, then you will see that all Level and 2 terms have “scope notes” which define the meaning of the term. Using level 3 terms will produce better search results. Some examples of level 2 terms and level 3 terms (within the overall structure of the vocabulary) are outlined below:

- Top Level Heading - Schools
- Level 2
 - attendance and truancy
- Level 3
 - absence from school
 - attendance rate
 - attendance register
- Level 2
 - homework
- Level 3
 - homework clubs
 - homework help
 - homework marking
- Level 2
 - journey to school
- Level 3
 - assisted transport to school
 - walking school bus

The non-preferred terms should not be used for tagging. These are only included to help people who are doing the tagging to find the right terms. Non-preferred terms are always associated with a preferred term. An example is where we have ‘Welfare rights’, which is associated with the non-preferred term “Welfare rights services”. In many instances, while non-preferred terms might be a “professionally correct term”, it’s associated preferred term is closer to that used in natural language and would be more readily understood by users.

7 Resource Implications

The initial tagging will need effort and require resource. Once the tagging has been completed, it will need maintenance. However, this is likely to only require occasional updates as services are added or changed. It may be possible for some or all of the tagging to be done automatically or semiautomatically, but this will depend on the information system being used. Tagging can seem slightly confusing at first, but it is a skill that can be learned quickly. OPENFAMILYSERVICES does offer an optional autotagging service for a fee.

8 Who Should Do the Tagging?

The best person (or people) to do the tagging are those who understand the subject matter the best. People who understand the subject, and the needs of the service users will do the tagging most effectively.

However, the practicalities will vary from one organisation to another and there is no 'one size fits all' approach. If you are new to tagging and are wondering what the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary is, it would be worth trying to find colleagues within your organisation who understand and have experience of using metadata and controlled lists. The people in the organisation who are likely to have this knowledge will include information officers, records managers, web editors, librarians and those working in information management.

9 How to Use the Vocabulary

9.1 Decide what the service is about

In using the vocabulary, you are really selecting one or more level 2 or level 3 terms. This is not complicated, although it might seem a bit daunting if you are not used to working with vocabularies.

Firstly, you need to decide what the service is about. You can then look through the vocabulary to select the terms that provide the best descriptions. If you are working in a Family Information Service (FIS), you are likely to have a good idea of what services are being provided. If you are new to FIS the vocabulary will be helpful in providing an overview of the subjects covered from the perspective of the parents and providers of the services.

When you are deciding what the service is about it is a good idea to try and work out what the main subject of the service is about. For example, services relating to behaviour are likely to be concerned with problematic behaviour on the assumption that parents with children who behave themselves do not tend to search for information about good behaviour.

In many cases, the service will be about one thing. However there will be some that are about more than one thing, or could be described and organised better by using more than one level 2 or level 3 term.

9.2 Select a term, or terms, from the vocabulary

Now that you have decided what the service is about, you need to find the right tag to describe it. To do this, you will need to scan through the vocabulary, or use a 'find' window if using an online version. As you become familiar with the structure of the vocabulary and its contents, term selection and tagging will become quicker and easier. As you use the vocabulary, it would be useful to provide feedback to the Parent Know How team on your "use" experience, and if you have any suggestions for changes or additions to be made to the vocabulary in subsequent updates.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How many terms can be added?

You should tag at least one level 2 term or level 3 term to each resource that is being tagged. However, you may wish to use more than one level 2 term or level 3 term.

Q. Can the non-preferred terms be used for tagging?

No, the non-preferred terms should definitely not be used for tagging. They are only in the vocabulary to help people find the preferred terms.

Q. What is the point of tagging? Can't people just use Google?

Tagging helps to organise and manage content so that is easier to search, find and use. It provides a consistency that means people do not have to keep learning new ways to find things.

Q. Won't tagging require a lot of time that we don't really have?

The initial tagging is going to require some investment in resource and there may be a learning curve within the organisation as to how to implement the tagging. Once the initial tagging has been done, then the only work will be that of maintenance - adding terms as new services are added, or if services change.

Q. How will the vocabulary be managed?

The vocabulary will be managed through an editorial panel. The role of this panel will be to collect and collate comments about changes to the vocabulary. Those changes will mainly come from users of the vocabulary. There will be a formal mechanism to enable comments to be captured on a regular basis. The vocabulary will be changed through a formal process so that everyone is working with the same version.

Q. What happens if a term can't be found in the vocabulary?

You may feel that there are no terms in the OPENFAMILYSERVICES vocabulary that accurately describe a particular service. Where you find cases like this, the recommendation is to tag to the term closest in meaning. Again, it will be useful to keep a record of such examples so that changes can be made to the vocabulary to ensure it provides comprehensive coverage. Any suggested changes can be sent to the editorial panel for review.