



IPTC - NAA
Information
Interchange
M o d e l
Guideline 3

[Comité International des Télécommunications de Presse](#)

IPTC/NAA SUBJECT CODES: IIM DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 3

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This document provides background on development of the revised Subject Code scheme and guidelines for using it. The new codes are designed to be used within the IIM (via new DataSets); within the NITF (elements and attributes); or in any situation where news material needs to be categorised. These are the main points:

1. Theory and Structure
 - Object Types
 - Attributes
 - Subject Codes
2. Reference Mechanisms
3. List Registry and Extensions
4. Legacy Format Issues
5. Lists of Subject Names, Subject Matter, Subject Detail

1. Theory and Structure

The IPTC Category Code Working Party devised a new hierarchy to describe the content of news material; one part of it is called "Subject." We made a deliberate break with the current terminology, to avoid confusion with "Category" and "Subcategory" in the existing transmission formats. Use of the new subject codes must be considered in the context of the descriptive hierarchy.

First, we describe all individual news items as **objects**, whether they are text, graphics, photos, audio, video or some combination of these. Each object in turn has a **type**. This can be compared with CLASS in the object-oriented theory. We have identified three different object types:

- **News** (the default; most objects will be "news")
- **Data** (intended to be used for tabular text files, such as statistics or market lists, as opposed to story text)
- **Advisory** (news service messages, generally not published)

Second, we concluded that some items in the existing Category Codes are not truly topics in and of themselves, but rather are concepts that might apply to news material in any category. These we call **attributes**. An attribute describes the nature or characteristics of a news object, not specifically its content. The notion of attribute is valid for all Object Types. The new plan contains the following attributes:

Object Attribute Name	Object Attribute Description
• Current	Indicates the information is about events taking place at the time of the report.
• Analysis	Data and conclusions drawn by a journalist who has researched the story in depth.
• Archive material	Material distributed previously that has been selected from the originator's archives.
• Background	Provides some scene setting and explanation for the event being reported.
• Feature	The information is about a particular event or individual that may not be significant to the current breaking news.
• Forecast	Used when the object contains opinion as to the outcome of a future event.
• History	Material based on previous rather than current events.
• Obituary	A narrative about an individual's life and achievements for publication after his or her death.
• Opinion	An editorial comment that reflects the views of the author.

- Polls & Surveys Numeric or other information produced as a result of a questionnaire to a sample of the population.
- Profile A narrative about the life and achievements of a living individual.
- Results Listings & Tables Numerical data presented in tabular form for easier understanding.
- Side bar & Supporting information A related story that provides additional insight into the news event being reported.
- Summary A number of stories that have been reduced in length and compiled into a single news item.
- Transcript & Verbatim The written version of an interview or uttered statement without alteration or comment.

The default value is Current. This is intended to be used when no other attribute applies (or when time precludes making a selection). Taking the object and attribute concepts together, then, a typical wire story would be a **News Object** with an attribute value of **Current** -- that is, it's a piece of routine text on breaking news.

The third piece of the architecture is the **Subject Code**, which identifies the general content of the News Object. The Subject Code itself is at the top of a three-level hierarchy: the second level is called **Subject Matter** and the third level **Subject Detail**. To date, we have developed Subject Matter lists for all 17 broad topics; and Subject Detail for Economy, Business & Finance.

The 17 top-level Subject Codes (and their three-letter abbreviations) are below; the full lists of all three levels are provided elsewhere.

Arts, Culture & Entertainment (*ACE*)
 Crime, Law & Justice (*CLJ*)
 Disasters & Accidents (*DIS*)
 Economy, Business & Finance (*FIN*)
 Education (*EDU*)
 Environmental issues (*ENV*)
 Health (*HTH*)
 Human Interest (*HUM*)
 Labour (*LAB*)
 Lifestyle & Leisure (*LIF*)
 Politics (*POL*)
 Religion and Belief (*REL*)
 Science & Technology (*SCI*)
 Social Issues (*SOI*)
 Sport (*SPO*)
 Unrest, Conflicts & War (*WAR*)
 Weather (*WEA*)

A few important notes about using the Subject Codes:

- They are **optional**. No one in the news business wants to impede rapid delivery of breaking material while a reporter or editor ponders assignment of a proper subject code (or indeed any other administrative task). If there is no time to apply a code, or uncertainty which would fit best, items may move with no code at all – as they sometimes do today. This amounts to an unspecified category of "None" or "General."
- Especially to augment identification of important news items that lack a Subject Code, news services will continue to indicate **news importance** -- "bulletin," "urgent" and the like -- to help customers find hot stories whatever the topic. The NITF contains a new, separate element for marking news importance (currently known as "urgency"). Once the initial dust has settled on a non-categorised breaking story, subject codes can be chosen and applied for the duration of the cycle.
- Subject codes are **repeatable**. Many stories span multiple areas – sports figures involved in criminal activity, as an example. News services may select more than one code so that on the customers' end, more than one interested news department in a given operation can spot the item.

As far as possible, we have attempted to put any given topic in the Subject, Subject Matter and Subject Detail lists only once. Reasonable minds may differ (and they have) on whether the Subject Matter "Epidemic & Plague," for example, belongs under the top-level code of "Disasters & Accidents" rather than "Health." There are other debatable placements. "Teachers Unions" happens to be under Education, not Labour. But for our purposes, it is more important that a newsworthy topic exist *somewhere* on the list, in a more or less logical spot, with its own unique reference number. If a provider or receiver keys on the reference number or the subject matter name to mark or find related items, its particular location on the hierarchical list is irrelevant.

Despite our effort to place topics in only one spot, there are some unavoidable duplicates. The most persistent example of this is under Economy, Business & Finance. Many discrete activities that generate news in their own right are also businesses: Media and Tourism are two examples. The intent is that news on Television as a medium – entertainment, news and the like – belongs under the "Arts, Culture and Entertainment" Subject Code. News about the business of television – network ownership, corporate matters – falls under Economy/Business/Finance. A story about remote Caribbean resorts fits the Tourism entry under Lifestyle & Leisure; a profile about a cruise ship company is Business. We define Sports as being "competitive exercise involving physical effort." This precludes activities of predominately mental exertion such as chess, bridge and other board or card games.

Finally, we point out the continued option of using the **keyword** in news transmissions. This repeatable field may be used for terms that help further define item, but that may not warrant inclusion in the subject lists. A couple examples:

- For a chess championship: Object=News, Object Type=Current, Subject=Lifestyle & Leisure, Keyword=Chess Masters.
- For a general weather story that cannot necessarily be covered by Object Type of "current": Object=News, Object Type=Feature, Subject=Weather, Keyword=Heat wave.

2. Reference Mechanisms

It is expected that the subject lists will be translated and used in many languages, often within the same news organisation (providers and customers alike). Thus there is a need for fixed anchors that can be used to identify unambiguously the same topic across all data streams. We provide two.

The first is a three-letter English code for the 17 broad categories. These generally represent the first letters of the word or words in the English version of the subject.

In addition, each Subject may be referenced by a number (01 to 17), which in turn is the basis of unique eight-digit numbers for each of the second- and third-level descriptors. The numbering scheme also allows for logical extensions to the lists.

3. List Registry and Extensions

The official published versions of the Subject lists will be in English. The IPTC will maintain a registry of subject reference numbers, Subject Matter and Subject Detail as appropriate in other languages as submitted by members or users. Translations of the English list into other languages are available (as PDF files) on the IPTC Web site, or in other forms from the IPTC.

In general, extensions to the published lists may only be used with the IPR=IPTC if the change has been formally considered and agreed within the IPTC. The lists will be subject to regular review and updating as deemed necessary by IPTC members. The version for a given list will be indicated by using the IPR field in DataSet 2:12 of the IIM as follows. The IPR "IPTC" will be followed by /X, where X indicates the version number of the list. The default value of "IPTC" is equivalent to "IPTC/1" and indicates the version of the list as published in the IIM V4. Users experiencing a serious recurring problem with coding news items should refer back to the IPTC for advice or to propose any amendments. We already have several possible changes to consider, including "correction" as either an object type or attribute; "initiative movements" as a Subject Matter under Politics; and certain subject

details under individual sports.

In order to be responsive to user needs a “fast track” process has been developed for extensions to the Subject Detail Lists. Subject Matter and other data will be considered through the normal IPTC Change Request process at the next scheduled IPTC meeting. Proposals from organisations outside IPTC must be sent to the Managing Director who will assist in identifying at least one current IPTC member to sponsor the request.

RULES FOR PROCESSING CHANGES:

1. The Change Request should be sent to the Managing Director preferably by e-mail or if not by fax. (Form is available on the IPTC Web site.)
2. Accelerate the process (similar to ISO fast track) to 28 days for Subject Details Only.
3. A jury of 3 will consider the Change Request for Subject Details. The Chairmen of the Standards Committee will appoint the Jury with concurrence of the committee itself. (These members should have a good knowledge of the Subject Reference system its background.)
4. Change Request is circulated to all membership. Members can forward constructive objections to the Jury within the first 21 days.
5. The Managing Director Assigns numbers and progresses the Change Request and the Jury Work and is responsible for the publication of the results.
6. For Subject Matters an Ad hoc group should address Change Request with the submitter

The easiest way to extend the lists as published in an ad-hoc fashion is to use the **keyword** as described in Section 1 above. If this proves insufficient, information providers may develop extensions of the second and third level of the subject hierarchy (Subject Matter and Subject Detail). The 17 parent Subjects as published by the IPTC and their reference number may not be extended or altered by individual information providers.

An agency extending the lists must use the mechanism described in version 4 of the IIM, involving a separately registered IPR. This allows for addition of local or regional interest items that might not find general usage by other news providers. For example, a North American agency may wish to adopt Subject Details for a particular sport that would specify various leagues or variations of the sport. A provider specialising in business information might wish to develop more subject detail on specific markets, such as commodities. Both such efforts would retain the 17 top-level Subject Codes, and could retain the secondary level as well. The eight-digit reference number accommodates any such extensions.

We are aware of other lists that touch on categorisation of news material. Two warrant a mention here.

The first is the list of competitive events developed and maintained by the International Olympic Committee. The IPTC list of individual sports is at a higher level, and smaller, than that of the IOC. The IOC includes many variations of an individual sport (track races of different lengths, for example) and a fluid collection of events that make news primarily in the context of the biennial Games (luge, synchronised swimming).

For these reasons, we do not include all Olympic sports explicitly. Rather they may be identified using the optional, repeatable **keyword** field. And Olympics itself (IOC or Special) is intended to be covered by the Sports Organisation Subject Matter entry under Sports.

The News Division of the Special Librarians Association in the U.S. is developing another list, primarily for news photo archivists in North America. The main goal is to identify terms that can be used to describe the nature and content of photographs, beyond words that may be present in a caption. The SLA is planning further work on this at a meeting in June. We are monitoring the effort but do not expect to incorporate the list. The scope is relatively narrow and the use is downstream, not at the source provider.

4. IPR Registration

An Information providers Reference (IPR) may be registered with IPTC under the following

circumstances:

- a. The Information Provider is a member in good standing of IPTC or
- b. The Information Provider is a registered holder of the Information Interchange Model
- c. The requested IPR mnemonic has not been registered by any other Information Provider.

Application should be made to the Managing Director IPTC, by EMAIL or FAX indicating the Information Providers full name and the desired IPR. When accepted the IPR details will be published in Appendix E of the Information Interchange Model.

5. Legacy Formats

The following mechanisms are proposed for dealing with legacy formats.

a. ANPA 1312

It appears unlikely that any part of the new Subject Code scheme can be incorporated into the ANPA 1312 transmission format. This is beyond the scope of the IPTC because of the rigid format used within ANPA 1312. The matter therefore is referred to those having the greatest interest in this item, namely the NAA Wire Services Guidelines Committee. (It is noted that any Subject Reference information would probably need to be in the text of a message).

b. IPTC 7901

The feasibility of adopting a common approach for the inclusion of Subject reference information into IPTC7901 is being studied by the major users of this format. If a common solution is determined this guideline will be updated accordingly.

6. IPTC SUBJECT CODES (Version IPTC/1)

a. Subject Codes (Top Level)

Arts, Culture & Entertainment (ACE) 01000000

Matters pertaining to the advancement and refinement of the human mind, of interests, skills, tastes and emotions

Crime, Law & Justice (CLJ) 02000000

Establishment and/or statement of the rules of behaviour in society, the enforcement of these rules, breaches of the rules and the punishment of offenders. Organisations and bodies involved in these activities.

Disasters & Accidents (DIS) 03000000

Man made and natural events resulting in loss of life or injury to living creatures and/or damage to inanimate objects and property.

Economy, Business & Finance (FIN) 04000000

All matters concerning the planning, production and exchange of wealth.

Education (EDU) 05000000

all aspects of furthering knowledge of human individuals from birth to death.

Environmental issues (ENV) 06000000

All aspects of protection, damage, and condition of the ecosystem of the planet earth and its surroundings.

Health (HTH) 07000000

All aspects pertaining to the physical and mental welfare of human beings.

Human Interest (HUM) 08000000

Lighter items about individuals, groups, animals or objects.

Labour (LAB) 09000000

Social aspects, organisations, rules and conditions affecting the employment of human effort for the generation of wealth or the provision of services and the economic support of the unemployed.

Lifestyle & Leisure (LIF) 10000000

Activities undertaken for pleasure, relaxation or recreation outside paid employment, including eating and travel.

Politics (POL) 11000000

Local, regional, national and international exercise of power, or struggle for power, and the relationships between governing bodies and states.

Religion and Belief (REL) 12000000

All aspects of human existence involving theology, philosophy, ethics and spirituality.

Science & Technology (SCI) 13000000

All aspects pertaining to human understanding of nature and the physical world and the development and application of this knowledge.

Social Issues (SOI) 14000000

Aspects of the behaviour of humans affecting the quality of life.

Sport (SPO) 15000000

Competitive effort involving physical effort. Organisations and bodies involved in these activities.

Unrest, Conflicts & War (WAR) 16000000

Acts of socially or politically motivated protest and/or violence.

Weather (WEA) 17000000

The study, reporting and prediction of meteorological phenomena.

b. Subject Matter (Second Level)

SUBJECT MATTER NAME AND SUBJECT REFERENCE NUMBER RELATIONSHIP
(Version IPTC/1)

Subject Name	Subject Reference Number	Subject Matter Name
Arts, Culture & Entertainment	01000000	
	01001000	Archaeology
	01002000	Architecture
	01003000	Bullfighting
	01004000	Carnival
	01005000	Cinema
	01006000	Dance
	01007000	Fashion
	01008000	Language
	01009000	Libraries & Museums
	01010000	Literature
	01011000	Music
	01012000	Painting
	01013000	Photography
	01014000	Radio

	01015000	Sculpture
	01016000	Television
	01017000	Theatre
Crime, Law & Justice	02000000	
	02001000	Crime
	02002000	Judiciary
	02003000	Police
	02004000	Punishment
	02005000	Prison
Disasters & Accidents	03000000	
	03001000	Drought
	03002000	Earthquake
	03003000	Famine
	03004000	Fire
	03005000	Flood
	03006000	Industrial accident
	03007000	Meteorological disaster
	03008000	Nuclear accident
	03009000	Pollution
	03010000	Transport accident
	03011000	Volcanic eruption
Economy, Business & Finance	04000000	
	04001000	Agriculture
	04002000	Chemicals
	04003000	Computing & Information Technology
	04004000	Construction & Property
	04005000	Energy & Resources
	04006000	Financial & Business Services
	04007000	Goods Distribution
	04008000	Macro Economics
	04009000	Markets
	04010000	Media
	04011000	Metal Goods & Engineering
	04012000	Metals & Minerals
	04013000	Process Industries
	04014000	Tourism & Leisure
	04015000	Transport
Education	05000000	
	05001000	Adult Education
	05002000	Further Education
	05003000	Parent Organisations
	05004000	Preschooling
	05005000	Schools
	05006000	Teachers Unions
	05007000	University
Environmental Issues	06000000	
	06001000	Alternative Energy
	06002000	Conservation
	06003000	Energy Savings
	06004000	Environmental Politics
	06005000	Environmental pollution
	06006000	Natural resources
	06007000	Nature
	06008000	Population
	06009000	Waste

	06010000	Water Supplies
Health	07000000	
	07001000	Diseases
	07002000	Epidemic & Plague
	07003000	Health treatment
	07004000	Health organisations
	07005000	Medical research
	07006000	Medical staff
	07007000	Medicines
	07008000	Preventative medicine
Human Interest	08000000	
	08001000	Animals
	08002000	Curiosities
	08003000	People
Labour	09000000	
	09001000	Apprentices
	09002000	Collective contracts
	09003000	Employment
	09004000	Labour dispute
	09005000	Labour legislation
	09006000	Retirement
	09007000	Retraining
	09008000	Strike
	09009000	Unemployment
	09010000	Unions
	09011000	Wages & Pensions
	09012000	Work Relations
Lifestyle & Leisure	10000000	
	10001000	Games
	10002000	Gaming & Lotteries
	10003000	Gastronomy
	10004000	Hobbies
	10005000	Holidays or vacations
	10006000	Tourism
Politics	11000000	
	11001000	Defence
	11002000	Diplomacy
	11003000	Elections
	11004000	Espionage & Intelligence
	11005000	Foreign Aid
	11006000	Government
	11007000	Human Rights
	11008000	Local authorities
	11009000	Parliament
	11010000	Parties
	11011000	Refugees
	11012000	Regional authorities
	11013000	State Budget
	11014000	Treaties & Organisations
Religion & Belief	12000000	
	12001000	Cults & sects
	12002000	Faith
	12003000	Free masonry
	12004000	Religious institutions

Science & Technology

13000000	
13001000	Applied Sciences
13002000	Engineering
13003000	Human Sciences
13004000	Natural Sciences
13005000	Philosophical Sciences
13006000	Research
13007000	Scientific exploration
13008000	Space programmes

Social Issues

14000000	
14001000	Addiction
14002000	Charity
14003000	Demographics
14004000	Disabled
14005000	Euthanasia
14006000	Family
14007000	Family planning
14008000	Health insurance
14009000	Homelessness
14010000	Minority groups
14011000	Pornography
14012000	Poverty
14013000	Prostitution
14014000	Racism
14015000	Welfare

Sport

15000000	
15001000	Aero and Aviation Sports
15002000	Alpine Skiing
15003000	American Football
15004000	Archery
15005000	Athletics, Track & Field
15006000	Badminton
15007000	Baseball
15008000	Basketball
15009000	Biathlon
15010000	Billiards, Snooker and Pool
15011000	Bobsleigh
15012000	Bowling
15013000	Bowls & Petanque
15014000	Boxing
15015000	Canoeing & Kayaking
15016000	Climbing
15017000	Cricket
15018000	Curling
15019000	Cycling
15020000	Dancing
15021000	Diving
15022000	Equestrian
15023000	Fencing
15024000	Field Hockey
15025000	Figure Skating
15026000	Freestyle Skiing
15027000	Golf
15028000	Gymnastics
15029000	Handball (Team)
15030000	Horse Racing, Harness Racing
15031000	Ice Hockey
15032000	Jai Alai (Pelota)

	15033000	Judo
	15034000	Karate
	15035000	Lacrosse
	15036000	Luge
	15037000	Marathon
	15038000	Modern Pentathlon
	15039000	Motor Racing
	15040000	Motor Rallying
	15041000	Motorcycling
	15042000	Netball
	15043000	Nordic Skiing
	15044000	Orienteering
	15045000	Polo
	15046000	Power Boating
	15047000	Rowing
	15048000	Rugby League
	15049000	Rugby Union
	15050000	Sailing
	15051000	Shooting
	15052000	Ski Jumping
	15053000	Snow Boarding
	15054000	Soccer
	15055000	Softball
	15056000	Speed Skating
	15057000	Speedway
	15058000	Sports Organisations
	15059000	Squash
	15060000	Sumo Wrestling
	15061000	Surfing
	15062000	Swimming
	15063000	Table Tennis
	15064000	Taekwon-Do
	15065000	Tennis
	15066000	Triathlon
	15067000	Volleyball
	15068000	Water Polo
	15069000	Water Skiing
	15070000	Weightlifting
	15071000	Windsurfing
	15072000	Wrestling
Unrest, Conflicts & War	16000000	
	16001000	Acts of terror
	16002000	Armed conflict
	16003000	Civil unrest
	16004000	Coup d'Etat
	16005000	Guerrilla activities
	16006000	Massacre
	16007000	Riots
	16008000	Violent demonstrations
	16009000	War
Weather	17000000	
	17001000	Forecasts
	17002000	Global change
	17003000	Reports
	17004000	Statistics
	17005000	Warnings

c. Subject Detail (Third Level)

**SUBJECT DETAIL NAME AND SUBJECT REFERENCE NUMBER RELATIONSHIP
(ECONOMY, BUSINESS & FINANCE) (Version IPTC/1)**

Subject Matter Name	Subject Reference Number	Subject Detail Name
AGRICULTURE	04001000	
	04001001	Arable Farming
	04001002	Fishing Industry
	04001003	Forestry & Timber
	04001004	Livestock Farming
CHEMICALS	04002000	
	04002001	Biotechnology
	04002002	Fertilisers
	04002003	Health & Beauty products
	04002004	Inorganic chemicals
	04002005	Organic chemicals
	04002006	Pharmaceuticals
	04002007	Synthetics & Plastics
COMPUTING & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	04003000	
	04003001	Hardware
	04003002	Networking
	04003003	Satellite technology
	04003004	Semiconductors & active components
	04003005	Software
	04003006	Telecommunications Equipment
	04003007	Telecommunications Services
CONSTRUCTION & PROPERTY	04004000	
	04004001	Heavy construction
	04004002	House building
	04004003	Real Estate
ENERGY & RESOURCES	04005000	
	04005001	Alternative energy
	04005002	Coal
	04005003	Oil & Gas - Downstream activities
	04005004	Oil & Gas - Upstream activities
	04005005	Nuclear power
	04005006	Electricity Production & Distribution
	04005007	Waste Management & Pollution Control
	04005008	Water Supply
FINANCIAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	04006000	
	04006001	Accountancy & Auditing
	04006002	Banking
	04006003	Consultancy Services

	04006004	Employment Agencies
	04006005	Healthcare Providers
	04006006	Insurance
	04006007	Legal services
	04006008	Market research
	04006009	Stock broking
GOODS DISTRIBUTION	04007000	
	04007001	Clothing
	04007002	Department stores
	04007003	Food
	04007004	Mail Order
	04007005	Retail
	04007006	Speciality stores
	04007007	Wholesale
MACRO-ECONOMICS	04008000	
	04008001	Central Banks
	04008002	Consumer Issues
	04008003	Debt Markets
	04008004	Economic Indicators
	04008005	Emerging Markets Debt
	04008006	Foreign Exchange Markets
	04008007	Government Aid
	04008008	Government Debt
	04008009	Interest Rates
	04008010	International Economic Institutions
	04008011	International Trade Issues
	04008012	Loan Markets
MARKETS	04009000	
	04009001	Energy
	04009002	Metals
	04009003	Securities
	04009004	Soft Commodities
MEDIA	04010000	
	04010001	Advertising
	04010002	Books
	04010003	Cinema
	04010004	News Agencies
	04010005	Newspaper & Magazines
	04010006	Online
	04010007	Public Relations
	04010008	Radio
	04010009	Satellite & Cable Services
	04010010	Television
METAL GOODS & ENGINEERING	04011000	
	04011001	Aerospace
	04011002	Automotive Equipment
	04011003	Defence Equipment
	04011004	Electrical Appliances
	04011005	Heavy engineering
	04011006	Industrial components

	04011007	Instrument engineering
	04011008	Shipbuilding
METALS & MINERAL	04012000	
	04012001	Building materials
	04012002	Gold & Precious Materials
	04012003	Iron & Steel
	04012004	Non ferrous metals
PROCESS INDUSTRIES	04013000	
	04013001	Alcoholic Drinks
	04013002	Food
	04013003	Furnishings & Furniture
	04013004	Paper & packaging products
	04013005	Rubber products
	04013006	Soft Drinks
	04013007	Textiles & Clothing
	04013008	Tobacco
TOURISM & LEISURE	04014000	
	04014001	Casinos & Gambling
	04014002	Hotels & accommodation
	04014003	Recreational & Sports goods
	04014004	Restaurants & catering
	04014005	Tour operators
TRANSPORT	04015000	
	04015001	Air Transport
	04015002	Railway
	04015003	Road Transport
	04015004	Waterway & Maritime Transport