The American Physical Society just released its new classification scheme, Physics Subject Headings. This classification scheme does not consist of subject headings the way I have defined them in the book. They are definitely subject descriptors—they have one and only one semantic notion per term, and there is no evidence of multiple, pre-coordinated semantic notions in any of the terms. Perhaps the only reason they call them “subject headings” is that the acronym can then sound like “fish” (PhySH)! While these subjects have not yet been officially folded into any databases, the classification may assist users in doing complex searching, especially when delving into broader, narrower, and related subject terms. The visual representations on the site are also fun to play around with.

![Visual representation of subject headings in PhySH](image)

*Figure 1. Visual representation of subject headings in PhySH.*

How can this resource help you? Suppose a physics student is doing research on electron scattering. If an insufficient number of resources were available, searching by the broader concept “atomic and molecular collisions” might retrieve a greater number of results.

I understand from a science librarian friend that this classification scheme may be folding into the Astrophysics Data System (http://ads.harvard.edu/) in the future.