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Book Reviews

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Book Review Editor

REDMOND-NEAL, ALICE, and HLAVA, MARJORIE M.K. (eds). *ASIS&T Thesaurus of Information Science, Technology, and Librarianship*. 3rd ed. Medford, N.J.: Information Today, c2005. xiii, 255 p. ISBN 1-57387-243-1 (pb).

This thesaurus is a revised edition of: *ASIS thesaurus of information science and librarianship*, edited by Jessica L. Milstead, 2nd ed. (1998). The change in the title is result of the change of the name of the ASIS (American Society of Information Science) into American Society for Information Science and Technology. Since 2002 the 2nd edition was used by *Information Science Abstracts* (now *Information Science & Technology Abstracts*). In the 2nd edition the goal of the thesaurus was formulated as "[include concepts from] information science and librarianship to a depth that will adequately support indexing in those fields with [...] related fields [...] computer science, linguistics and cognitive sciences [...]" (p. vii). The present editors started to update the thesaurus to reflect "the current state of the field and to implement it for indexing the Society's publications for the ASIS&T Digital Library" (p. v). The draft 3rd edition is used to index a great part of the Society's four publications. This means that the 3rd edition is, more than its predecessors, based on literary warrant as far as this warrant is reflected in ASIS&T publications. The Netherlands have a descriptor, but Romania or Portugal not. The Bliss Bibliographic Classification is mentioned, but the far more often used Russian Library Bibliographical Classification (BBK) is missing.

The thesaurus is presented in three parts:

1. An alphabetical listing of all terms. Here one finds the preferred and non-preferred terms with their relations denoted in the customary form (SN, BT, NT, RT, USE and UF). The ordering is word-by-word.
2. An hierarchical display of the terms. This display contains the preferred terms only.
3. A permuted display of all terms. Unlike the 2nd edition, this list contains the non-preferred terms too.

The thesaurus is like its predecessors a faceted one. There are seven main facets: 1. People and organizations, 2. Actions, events, and processes, 3. Physical objects, 4. Theoretical concepts and influences on information, 5. Information, information delivery formats and channels, 6. Methods of study, 7. Geographic information. The first five facets are subdivided in subfacets, the last have just one subfacet each. In total there are 18 subfacets, referred to as "top terms" in the language of the thesaurus. This structure is not very different from the structure of the second edition, although the number of subfacets and the terminology has changed. There is one new facet "geographic information" with one subfacet: "countries and regions". In this facet one can see very clearly see that the thesaurus is based on literary warrant: only relatively few countries are mentioned. The facet "methods of study" is expanded strongly. Under each of the top terms additional concepts are presented in a hierarchical structure. The maximum depth of the hierarchy is nine, although most subfacets have no more than four or five levels. The record for the "bibliometrics" entry shows clearly the changes. The domain and the main structure have not changed, but narrower terms not previously mentioned are added.

Second edition		*Third edition*	
bibliometrics		**bibliometrics**	
UF	co-word analysis	UF	co-word analysis
BT	informetrics	BT	informetrics
NT	citation analysis	NT	Bradford's law
	Lotka's law		citation analysis
			journal productivity
			Lotka's law
			Zipf's law
RT	co-occurrence analysis	RT	bibliometric scatter
	growth		co-occurrence analysis
	information use		growth
	scatter (bibliometrics)		information use

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The total number of preferred terms is 1970 against 1316 in the 2nd edition. The number of preferred terms (descriptors) per top term is uneven: 4 in "buildings and facilities" and about 400 – one fifth of the total – in "activities and operations." The number of non-preferred terms I estimate as around 1000. In the second edition there were about 700 non-descriptors. The terminology itself is modernized compared with the 2nd edition, a must in a field that is changing rapidly. Just one example: in the 2nd edition "gateways," in the 3rd edition "portals UF gateways." In this thesaurus a few multihierarchical subdivisions are found, e.g. "collection management" has two broader terms: "information resources management" and "library technical services."

The usability of this new edition is better than that of its forerunners thanks to a better literary warrant, and also thanks to a better layout. At the other hand comparing the 2nd and 3rd edition shows how well Jessica Milstead did her work. But it also shows once again that to make a good documentary language it is necessary to use it for indexing a collection in the field.

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MULVANY, NANCY C. *Indexing Books*. 2nd ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, c2005. xiv, 315 p. ISBN 0-226-55276-4.

This update maintains the place of Mulvany's 1994 work as an essential indexing resource. Addressed to indexers, authors and editors, it provides a thorough introduction to the field of back-of-the-book indexing, while providing context and direction for dealing with some of the more arcane problems that can arise.

Book indexers must analyze text rapidly and organize the "map" that they are creating in a manner that fits the anticipated cognitive patterns of potential readers, is internally consistent and corresponds to standards. Intuition, high-level analytical skills, pattern-recognition abilities, commonsense and the ability to communicate the big picture as well as the details in few words are signs of a gifted indexer. Thus, it makes sense that Nancy Mulvany's conviction that indexers are born, not made, underlies the purpose and structure of *Indexing Books.*

> Indexing books is a form of writing … a mixture of art and craft, judgment and selection. With practice and experience, indexers develop their own styles …. The best we can do as teachers of indexing is to present the rules and offer guidance (p. x).

> The indexer's ability to recognize patterns and relationships is a unique human skill that cannot be automated … (p. 271).

Consequently, this is a book that focuses on best practices and acceptable options, not on specializations. While it provides contexts and procedures for the practice of indexing so that individuals new to the field may use it as a textbook, it goes beyond this to suggest avenues and resources for decision-making. Established professionals as well as students will therefore find it useful. Mulvany speaks directly to the readers, engaging them with the material; her philosophy comes through clearly.

Mulvany refers extensively to current authorities throughout, linking practice to ISO standards, the British standard, NISO guidelines, *AACR2R*, the *Chicago Manual of Style*, as well as to more specialized resources. Citations have been meticulously updated and references to the latest research and discussions included.

The book starts with a discussion of what an index is, its purpose and how it may be used. "As a rich paratext, the index mediates the book to the reader" (p. 15). Chapter two is addressed to authors. In most cases American publishers hold authors responsible for indexing their own books, whether through their own labour or through hiring an indexer. With this in mind Mulvany provides an overview of contractual issues and the process; the on-going debate on author-indexer versus professional indexer is thoroughly explored. Pointing out that the "art and craft of indexing is mastered by few" (p. 31), Mulvany nevertheless encourages authors who are seriously interested to learn how to index since "[i]ndexing one's own book is certainly not an impossible task, but it is a demanding task when done well" (p. 31).