Editorial

by Hope A. Olson

Become Part of a Tradition with a Future

Knowledge Organization is a vibrant international journal that crosses boundaries and links theory and practice within and across knowledge domains. It has maintained a tradition of high quality and innovative scholarship and is at the centre of the growing field represented by its title. Becoming involved in *Knowledge Organization* is an opportunity to participate in an exciting and complex intellectual endeavour. Submitting, refereeing and soliciting manuscripts, reviewing books, reading the journal (as a subscriber or a member of the International Society for Knowledge Organization), and citing the journal are all ways of being part of our dynamic discourse. In this, my first issue as editor of *Knowledge Organization*, I want to discuss its purpose, its current profile, and its future with a view to inviting your participation in this exciting endeavour.

Purpose of *Knowledge Organization*

To look at the purpose of *Knowledge Organization* I will return to the statement that Ingetraut DAHLBERG included in the first issue of the journal, then called *International Classification*. These three levels of purpose might be considered the mission, goals and objectives of the journal:

1. *This journal is a Programme* – the mission of *Knowledge Organization*
   1) to overcome the boundaries which still separate those interested in classification methodology from each other
   2) to serve as a medium for knowledge exchange on the international level
   3) to find a common basis for the classification methodologies that have developed in different subject fields: library science, information science, natural sciences, industrial administration, linguistics, and philosophy.
2. *The journal has a Programme* – the goals of *Knowledge Organization*
   1) to draw attention to the existence of a new autonomous field of knowledge
   2) to provide a platform for the presentation of ideas and scientific discussion
   3) to unite the specialists from various fields to develop a common basis for their efforts.
3. *The journal implements its Programme* – the objectives of *Knowledge Organization*
   1) with original articles dealing with theory and practice
   2) with critical comments on articles
   3) with a "Terminology Corner" (dealing with the specific terminology of our own field)

The programme that Dr. DAHLBERG set out in 1974 has been pursued by both *International Classification* and *Knowledge Organization* over the last twenty-six years. It is still a clear enunciation of *Knowledge Organization*'s purpose in the year 2000 and beyond.

Interpreting the three points of our mission, it is clear that this journal was founded with foresight and has a continuing mandate as we begin a new century. First, *Knowledge Organization* is intended "to overcome the boundaries which still separate those interested in classification methodology from each other." The boundaries that we still find are of three kinds: those between means of knowledge organization, those between different groups of information users and those between theory and practice. While classification has the longest history, many other means of knowledge organization are well-established, such as thesauri, and others are relatively new, such as ontologies and knowledge management. These various means have both theoretical and practical aspects – though the emphasis may vary. They also vary in the audiences they address – some aiming to be universal and others more focussed. *Knowledge Organization* is a space for in-

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teraction between these differences. As Dr. DAHLBERG said in her goals for the journal, we intend "to draw attention to the existence of a new autonomous field of knowledge." The space that the journal provides is coextensive with the ideas and applications of the knowledge domain that we now call "knowledge organization" – it is "a platform for the presentation of ideas and scientific discussion." This issue alone brings together theory and terminology with applications for systems and for users.

The second part of *Knowledge Organization*'s programme is "to serve as a medium for knowledge exchange on the international level." This issue including articles from France, India, Spain, and Uruguay and reviews from Canada, India and Poland, is indicative of the use of *Knowledge Organization* as a meeting space between countries and cultures. The consulting editors, drawn from five continents, contribute to the internationality of the journal. The International Society for Knowledge Organization, our parent body, has wide international representation in its members and several chapters in Europe with new ones on the horizon in Latin America and Africa. The value of this link is shown by the three articles in this issue that are translations of papers from the Spanish chapter's conference, refereed to bring the most appropriate and highest quality work from that venue to a wider audience. Finally, on a practical level, the cost of the journal has not risen as some others that exclude true international circulation by pricing themselves beyond the means of libraries and individuals in many countries.

The third part of *Knowledge Organization*'s programme is "to find a common basis for the classification methodologies that have developed in different subject fields: library science, information science, natural sciences, industrial administration, linguistics, and philosophy." Our interdisciplinarity is a major strength as it allows us to pursue our goal "to unite the specialists from various fields to develop a common basis for their efforts." *Knowledge Organization* is a space in which we can learn from each other, whether or not we can find some single common theory or functionality.

Current Profile of *Knowledge Organization*

Knowledge Organization is a respected, refereed, scholarly journal and the only one to provide the boundary-crossing, international and interdisciplinary coverage described above. It is widely indexed, including in the very selective *Social Sciences Citation Index*. Articles from *Knowledge Organization*, and its predecessor, *International Classification*, have been cited in works across the fields of library and information science and in other fields such as computing and the natural and other applied sciences. The consulting editors include internationally known academics and researchers, among them the editors of three major classification schemes. *Knowledge Organization* is also the most significant tool for keeping up with current developments in this field. In addition to original articles, each issue includes book reviews of current interest edited by Michèle HUDON, and the definitive bibliography in our field, "Knowledge Organization Literature," edited by Gerhard RIESTHUIS. *Knowledge Organization* is also the major source of relevant news and reports gathered by Jens-Erik MAI with the aid of Alexander SIGEL and Elin JACOB and news about the FID/CR from Nancy WILLIAMSON. As the official publication of the International Society for Knowledge Organization, *Knowledge Organization* carries the imprimatur of the only global venue bringing together classification in and other forms of the organization of knowledge and information from many fields of work and study.

Future of *Knowledge Organization*

The current profile of *Knowledge Organization* is a sound foundation for its future. The mission and goals of the journal seem timeless when read after more than a quarter of a century. We could add a few more disciplines to the list contributing to our field and we know that our methods are now far more computer-oriented than they once were, but the fundamental goals of boundary-crossing, international exchange and interdisciplinarity are still absolutely sound.

The ways in which we pursue our mission and goals are more subject to adaptation. Original articles, as stated in our objectives, are still the primary vehicle. We have supplemented them with reviews, news and bibliographic coverage for a fuller exploration of the field. Terminology is now the topic of articles, not just a "corner" of our space. What we do not have is "critical comments on articles." I invite you to write responses of intellectual interest to the editor as you read and think through and beyond the work presented in the journal. These responses will appear in a new section of the journal: Discussion. They are intended to further thought on topics rather than argue with it so additional angles and insights are most welcome. *Knowledge Organization* can then be a space for

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more fluid and spontaneous discussion in addition to the functions it already fulfills.

There is plenty of room for many to join in the future of *Knowledge Organization* and I invite you to do so in any of several ways: submit relevant high quality manuscripts and encourage others to do so, read the journal regularly and write to our Discussion section, volunteer to be a referee by sending me your areas of expertise and contact information, or volunteer to be a book reviewer by contacting Michèle HUDON. If you are not already a member of ISKO join now and if your institution does not already subscribe to *Knowledge Organization* encourage it to do so.

As we look to the future of *Knowledge Organization*, I especially want to acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of two people who have made that future possible: Clare BEGHTOL, the president of ISKO and Acting Editor for the past year, has seen us safely through a complex editorial transition and has set us on a productive path; and Angela KUBLIK, my editorial assistant, has helped me to prepare for assuming the role of editor, has enabled the publication of this issue and will continue to work on *Knowledge Organization* for the coming year. Enormous thanks is due to both of them.

Looking forward to your participation in *Knowledge Organization*,

Dr. Hope A. Olson, Editor-in-Chief
Knowledge Organization
School of Library & Information Studies
3-20 Rutherford South
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2J4
Canada
ko@ualberta.ca

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Dr. Michèle Hudon, Book Review Editor
Knowledge Organization
École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information
Université de Montréal
CP 6128 succ Centre-Ville
Montréal QC H3C 3J7
Canada
michele.hudon@umontreal.ca

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