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special schemes, that is an aggregate which would not necessarily have any overall coherence.

From here Foskett moved on to discuss a paper on "Definitional approaches in the design of the terms used in classification and thesauri and their implications for retrieval and for automatic classification" given by Elaine **Svenonius**. She had stressed the importance of accurate definitions to improve the precision of terms particularly where hierarchical relationships are involved. Svenonius distinguished two different kinds of hierarchies - those that involve logical relationships and those which are based on difference perspective viewpoints. The general discussion of this point focused on whether or not some terms are always true and whether there can be unique definitions. Foskett felt that there could be unique definition and that the solution to locating such definitions is in an "integrative-level hierarchical system ".

Following from this a lively interchange took place on the definition of several terms used within classification itself, specifically pre-coordinate, post-coordinate and facet. Eric **Coates** reminded the meeting that classification itself is a definition system and suggested that it is only cross classification that needs defining. In further discussion Dr. **Edkins** referred to a paper by Clare **Beghtol** on "What is an event? Domain analysis of narrative documents" in which her research focused on the understanding of narrative by the classifier and the user. In this context Edkins further referred to Francis **Miksa's** paper which considered "The influence of mathematics on Ranganathan's classification theory".

Ultimately, the discussion turned to the internet. Foskett observed that Nancy **Williamson's** paper on "Knowledge organization and the Internet" had reported on the very superficial use of classification in this system. Most of those present felt that the internet is out of control. However, Mrs. Dextre **Clarke** pointed to the view of Francis Miksa that we should take a different view of the internet by comparing it to conventional publishing and concentrating on the needs of particular user groups. It was announced that the next meeting would be held on Friday November 7, 1997 and the agenda would focus on "The relationship between technology and the disciplines."

ASIS Annual Meeting

The 1997 Annual Meeting of ASIS was held in Washington DC, November 1-6.

Once again ASIS SIG/CR held a one day Workshop and also participated in several programmes in the main meeting.

Seven papers were presented in the 8th ASIS SIG/CR Classification Research Workshop. These papers were on a variety of topics related to classification.

Preliminary proceedings were available at the workshop and the papers will be published in final form later.

A paper on "Classification Systems as boundary objects in diverse information ecologies" by Hanne **Albrechtsen** and Elin **Jacob** presented research on the "notion of the classification scheme as a transitional element or 'boundary object'. The authors offer an alternative approach to the traditional classification system. In doing so their work attempts to address the problem of a static framework and to recognize the underlying relationship between user access and collective knowledge structures. They see the role of classification as facilitation of communication, maintenance of coherence and the establishment of shared conceptual context. Tom **Curran** and Paul **Thompson** considered "Automatic Categorization of Statute Documents". The paper focused primarily on the methodology and the system used a set of descriptors from statute documents to provide a lexicon of term.

In a paper on "Knowledge Class - a dynamic structure for subject access on the web", Xia **Lin** and Lois Mai **Chan**" described an investigation of how traditional information organizing concepts, methods and tools could be applied in the digital environment both theoretically and practically. The method called "Knowledge Class" is designed to be used for organization and access. It is seen as being primarily designed for use on the web as an interface between web technology and traditional devices of knowledge organization and access. The organizing framework is a classified mini-thesaurus containing hierarchically structured collections of terms. The structures are dynamic in nature and emphasize the intellectual construction of word/term relationships The system makes web information access transparent to the user and provides relatively stable information space. while maintaining dynamic links to adapt to a changing digital environment. A demonstration of Knowledge Class may be found on the world wide web at http//lislin.gws.uky.edu/kc/index.html. Marianne Lykke **Nielsen** described "The word association in the methodology of thesaurus construction."

In contrast to the traditional thesaurus, the thesaurus developed here is a searching thesaurus which does not standardize terms, but instead provides alternatives (e.g., synonyms, quasi-synonyms, antonyms etc) to the terms the searcher has used in a query. Thus the user is presented with different ways of looking for his/her subjects and stimulates further consideration of the subject. The main purposes to increase the user's view of the subject and to elaborate and clarify search strategy. Thus it aids searchers in four ways, to gain access to a subject, to help in the understanding of the subject, to aid the user in understanding her/his needs and to act as a tool in query expansion in an interactive environ-

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ment. The process of thesaurus construction is described, as is the word association methodology and a test was carried out and the results analyzed.

In another paper, Miguel **Ruiz** and Padmini **Srinivasan** described "Automatic Text Categorization Using Neural Networks". Results were presented from an experiment in automatic text categorization using articles from MEDLINE. The main purpose of the research was to create a counterpropagation network and "train" it to assign terms from MeSH based on single terms from titles and abstracts. Comparison was made with a backproposition neural network developed for the same purpose. Results suggested that neural networks could be an important tool in automatic text categorization. In the final paper, Peiling **Wang** and Line **Pouchard** discussed "End-User Searching of Web Resources: Subject Needs and Zero Hits". In this investigation, the authors carried out an analysis of a log file which captures users' queries at the website of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The purpose of the research was to: a) understand website users needs; b) to investigate user search success (or lack there of); and c) to identify problems related to unsuccessful searches. Most of the searches dealt with finding the institution and searching for academic information. Errors in zero-hit situations were both semantic and syntactic. Findings suggested that end-users need help and while many syntactic errors can be corrected automatically, semantic errors need more help from the website.

In addition to the Classification Research Workshop, ASIS SIG/CR participated in a number of main and SIG programmes in the main conference. Of major interest to FID'CR members are the following. "The Concept of subject in a semiotic light" by Jens-Erik **Mai** argues for the representation of digital objects in a semiotic framework. Conclusions indicated more research is critically needed on the indexing process, particularly the first step, the determination of the meaning of the digital object. Susanne **Ornager** presented a paper on "Image retrieval: theoretical analysis and empirical user studies on accessing information in images". In it the author describes different conceptions of subject indexing as for defining an operational subject indexing strategy for images. She examines work of two researchers. These are the theory of three levels of meaning set forth in the work of Erwin Panofsky and a semiology for pictoral expressions proposed by Roland Barthes. From there **Ornager** suggests a new methodology drawing on these two authors and carries out an empirical study based on newspaper archives, demonstrating user group requirements of archivists, journalists and newspaper readers. The **Mai** and **Ornager** papers are reproduced in full in the proceedings of the annual meeting.

SIG/CR also participated in a number of sessions in cooperation with other SIGs. A session on "Classifi-

cation and indexing for image collections: theory and practice" included four presentations: "Explorations in using audio description as a tool for indexing moving image documents", by James **Turner**; "How people describe images: continuing research", by Corinne **Jorgensen**; "Sharing congruence: text-based and image-based representations for moving images", by Abby **Goodrum**; and "Vocabulary for cataloging images in a digital environment: the Corbis controlled vocabulary", by Andrew **Grove**.

Another session entitled "Classificatory structures and the construction of reality" explored ways in which classificatory structures support interaction among individuals, discourse communities and scholarly disciplines in a Global Information Society. The three presentations focused on specific disciplines or domains. Geoffrey **Bowker** and Susan Leigh **Star's** presentation focused on the *Nursing Interventions Classification;* Jeffery **Huber** considered "Social constructs and disease: implications for a controlled vocabulary for HIV/AIDS"; and using womens studies as her base, Hope **Olson** described "Mapping beyond Dewey's boundaries: constructing classificatory space for marginalized knowledge."

A third SIG session looked at "Organizing and representing knowledge graphically using classification structures" exploring ways in which such structures in graphical interfaces might enhance retrieval systems design. Three presentations were given: Marcia **Zeng** discussed "The application of classification structure in a visual terminology database of medicinal herbs"; Allyson **Carlyle** and Sam **Oh** described "Graphic representation of author and work information using classification", while Xia **Lin** focused on "Graphical displays of term relationships". A fourth presentation by Uta **Priss** and Elin **Jacob** considered "Development of a lattice-based graphical interface for conceptual navigation in classification systems" The texts of the SIG session presentations are not included in the ASIS proceedings. However, a general description is given for each session and the names of the authors, the titles of their presentation, and their institutional affiliations are given so that interested persons can contact them.