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Knowledge Organization as a Problem of Bibliographic Tool Structure

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At present the problem of knowledge organization into bibliographic tools must be examined in connection with the parallel existence of bibliographic information in traditional and machine-readable forms. There are two approaches to knowledge organization in traditional bibliographic tools: a formal approach (alphabetical, chronological groupings of the material) and a subject approach (systematic, thematic, subject groupings). Bibliographic databases at the same time combine special features of several traditional bibliographic tools by way of record grouping; they meet users' needs in knowledge organization better than the traditional ones. (Author)

Knowledge organization presupposes classification in the broadest sense of the word (classifying and subject cataloguing) not only in library catalogues, reflecting actually existing masses of bibliographic data, but also in bibliographic tools. There is a complex classification of bibliographic tools. They are divided into different types (bibliographic indexes, lists, surveys), classes (national, scientific auxiliary, recommendatory bibliographic indexes and others in accordance with their social meaning; universal, special, thematic bibliographic indexes and others in accordance with their subject, etc., also many other indications for determining classes of bibliographic tools exist), genres (bibliographic monographs, dictionaries, etc.), and forms (cards, books, microforms, and machine-readable ones). From the four categories enumerated is the form which influences knowledge organization in bibliographic tools first of all. At present the problem of knowledge organization in bibliographic tools must be examined in connection with the parallel existence of bibliographic information in traditional and machine-readable forms.

Depending on the aims with which readers are using bibliographic information there are two approaches to knowledge organization in traditional bibliographic tools: a formal approach, ensuring the seeking of documents by their outside features with the object of their discovery and identification (alphabetical, chronological and other groupings of the material), and a subject approach, which has received wider use in bibliographic practice than the first one (systematic, thematic, subject and other groupings). For example, alphabetical grouping is preferable for preparing retrospective national bibliographic indexes; systematic - in current national bibliographic indexes, universal and special scientific auxiliary bibliographic indexes; thematic grouping has received wider use in recommendatory bibliographic indexes. At the same time multi-aspect seeking of information in traditional bibliographic tools is ensured by the well-developed system of auxiliary indexes which make bibliographic tools more informative in comparison with library catalogues.

In machine-readable bibliographic tools the way of grouping of records is invisible for users and has no importance for them, as information retrieval is possible by searching for any of the elements of the record and even parts of the elements. In other words, bibliographic databases at the same time combine special features of several classes of bibliographic tools by way of record grouping. The subject approach is ensured with record elements which expose the contents of documents: classification numbers, subject headings, keywords. It is possible to use simultaneously classification numbers of several classification tables; subject access is not limited in information retrieval strictly by the first word of the subject heading formulated beforehand, etc. In conclusion, machine-readable bibliographic tools meet users' needs in knowledge organization better than traditional ones.