EDITORIAL

Classification Literature?

For the first time in the five-year-old "history" of this journal our readers will look in vain for the "Classification Literature" department. Usually comprising some 20 pages of each issue and announcing or annotating from 300 to 400 items, this feature is by no means missing this time for lack of literature to be reviewed. Quite the contrary! Exclusively prepared so far by your editor-in-chief, this feature demands at least two full weeks of scrutiny – two weeks which just were not available this time. I apologize for this omission and will try to make up for it in the next issue – this I promise.

On the other hand, we wonder whether anybody really misses this section in this issue? To offer such a survey of current literature is one thing, to know whether it meets with any interest on the part of the reader is another. Such an echo has been missing throughout the years this journal has existed. Have we been on the right track?

The extra pages thus "gained" in this issue came in most handy, however, for adequate coverage of the numerous recent classification conferences and for announcements of ones to come. You may be amazed to realize how enormously classification research and practice have developed in the past few years. Thus, the number of conference papers read (or to be read) at meetings of the Classification Society in Great Britain or the United States in 1978 has doubled in comparison with 1977. In Canada, a first Classification Conference of the Canadian Classification Research Group took place early in May 1978 (cf. the report by E. Svenonius), while in France the newly-founded French Classification Society started out in late May of this year with a conference at which some 26 papers were presented. In Germany the German Classification Society held its second conference, attended by about 140 participants (including 25 ones from abroad, e.g. from USA, Great Britain, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Austria, Switzerland, Luxemburg and India), in April 1978.

Overall activity is indeed visibly increasing; it seems that care should be taken in the different countries to carefully "absorb" the new knowledge evolving in discussion groups and seminars organized by existing classification societies or other groups. In response to an encouragement by FID/CR voiced in 1964 and later, various member countries of the FID – e.g. Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany (FRG), India, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States – have established classification research groups. Only a few of these are really active; in our opinion (admittedly based on a highly limited view) a great many of them seem to be sleeping rather deeply. When comparing the total number of subscriptions placed for this journal with those emanating from members of such classification groups (which enjoy a sizable discount), I feel rather sad.

In my opinion, the time has come to set up a national classification society in each and every country. Such a society should not, however, concentrate on one single application area of classification, such as library classification, classification for information retrieval, commodity or materials classification, patent classification, numerical classification, etc. Rather, it should comprise all of these application areas while also inviting the interest of philosophers and terminologists in order to avert the danger of acquiring a one-track mind before long. There is one common ground for all fields concerned with the application of classification: the determination of the concepts to be used for knowledge ordering, the analysis of these concepts, and the determination of their characteristics – whether necessary of facultative – and of their differing roles in information representation. On this basis, therefore, those interested in the vast area of the organization of knowledge, whether for its own sake or for policy-making purposes, may find an inexhaustible source of investigation and mutual exchange, since our knowledge is continuously expanding everywhere – and in our own field as well. Get started, friends!

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Gesellschaft für Klassifikation e.V.

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

After a first conference in Münster/Westfalia, on June 4, 1977, and a recent second one in Frankfurt-Höchst, April 6-7, 1978, the German Classification Society plans a third one concerning the topic

CLASSIFICATION AND COGNITION

The role of classification in the generation, presentation and mediation of knowledge

Königstein/Taunus, Haus der Begegnung, 5-7 April 1979

The subtopics to be treated in panel discussions, lectures and workshops including consideration of the special aspects of certain application fields have been outlined as follows:

Generation of knowledge: concept analysis, concept typology (basic concepts, reference of concepts), theory of characteristics, theory of relationships, data analysis, data reduction, heuristics and order, etc.

Presentation of knowledge: formation of classes, class arrangement, seriation and ordination, user-oriented outline of classification systems, compatibility/correlation tables/intermediate thesauri, unified faceting, syntax of facet formulas, multilevel approach to classification systems, etc.

Mediation of knowledge: indexing rules, rules for subject cataloguing, systematization and user expectations, esp. regarding reference tools, shelf arrangement, user-oriented notations, computerized reclassification, classification and transdisciplinarity, etc.

Scientists and practitioners of the different fundamental and application-oriented fields of classification are cordially invited to submit proposals for papers in short form (length: one typed page) by Oct. 1, 1978, to the offices of the Gesellschaft für Klassifikation e. V. It is intended to furnish simultaneous translation (E-D, D-E) during the conference.

The papers will be published in proceedings volumes in the same way as was done for the first and the second conferences. The volumes for these conferences are available at the Secretariat of the Gesellschaft für Klassifikation e. V , Woogstr. 36a, D-6000 Frankfurt 50. (Proceedings 1977: DM 28.50, Proceedings 1978: to be published in autumn 1978).

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