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Reports and Communications

Colloquy on the DB Standard Subject File

On the 5th and 6th October 1989 the Deutsche Bibliothek (DB) at Frankfurt, West Germany, was the scene of a colloquy on the DB's Standard Subject File ('Schlagwortnormdatei', abbreviated SWD), a gathering intended to offer both the tenderers and the present and future users of the SWD a first-time opportunity for an intensive exchange of information and views. The colloquy was hosted by the Deutsche Bibliothek together with its two partners in the elaboration and administration of the SWD: the Augsburg University Library and the Munich-based Bavarian State Library. The 60-odd participants, including guests from Switzerland, Austria and the GDR (East Germany), represented practically all fields of the library world, from university and large public libraries down to technical and special libraries and librarian training institutions.

Central points of interest at the colloquy were, on the one hand, reports from the SWD editing bureaus at Frankfurt, Augsburg and Munich and by the current users of the SWD file and the RSWK (subject cataloguing rules), while on the other hand persons and parties interested in future utilization of the SWD developed their plans for cooperation and adoption of SWD data. The concepts entertained here ranged from highly concrete cooperation models, such as developed e.g. by the university library center for North Rhine-Westphalia (a West German constituent state), to arrangements of at best long-term effectiveness, such as proposed e.g. by the Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig or the representatives of the Austrian libraries.

Considerable attention was attracted, and partly controversial comments evoked, by the papers dealing with a further development of the SWD, e.g. toward improved systematization, or with the utilization in retrieval of the RSWK chains developed on the basis of the SWD. Thus the CD-ROM edition of the Deutsche Bibliographie and its possibilities and limits in subject retrieval were presented, also with the aim of arriving at conclusions as to the suitability of RSWK chains in OPACs. If from the DB's point of view positive experiences dominated, the problems encountered by an external user in literature searching with the aid of a CD-ROM clearly showed where improvements in user guidance and user interface are desirable and where the approaches used in the SWD may lead to information noise or even to loss of information. Both papers also took issue, however, with the assumption that a post-coordinating search using individual subject headings renders RSWK chain formation superfluous in an OPAC. In the selection of the documents displayed the pre-coordinated RSWK chains can furnish important additional information.

Systematic access possibilities to the SWD through a UDC-based systematization of the subject headings were presented by the DB and supplemented by the Zurich ETH Library's OPAC with its UDC-based retrieval possibilities and an alphabetical subject index adapted to the SWD. Here, resonance among the participants varied widely, ranging as it did from acclaim for having such an internationally recognized access instrument supplement the SWD, to skepticism in view of the UDC's reputed outdatedness, to satisfaction with the DB's current HJV/MJV classification, which was variously regarded as adequate for providing systematic access to the SWD (HJV = half-year list; MJV = more (than one year) list).

Less optimistic prospects were opened up by the deliberations on linking up the SWD with other standard subject files such as the GKD (Gesamtkörperschaftsdatei = Standard Corporate Authors File) or the personal name files. The divergent provisions of the RAK (rules for author cataloguing) and RSWK books of rules impose narrow limits here, although in certain subfields, such as e.g. the Medieval Personal Names File, utilization of the SWD has proved most useful.

As the work of the SWD editing bureaus has already been described in detail elsewhere (1), suffice is here to note that the spokespersons for the three participating libraries agreed that the organizational form of cooperation had developed positively. Limits were imposed, however, by the less than satisfactory personnel strengths and technological equipment available. Improvements, e.g. through larger computer capacity, were urgently necessary. On the other hand, the introduction of e.g. an electronic mailbox for information exchange among the three partners in file administration had shown how useful technological innovations can be for such a project.

The reports from the circle of SWD and RSWK users were delivered by two lady representatives each from the public libraries, the university libraries and the library associations. Positive experiences dominated here; the SWD is being used as a subject heading index for the given local classification systems, and the use of the DB's RSWK chains in OPACS or the availability of the SWD on PCs are either being planned or have already been realized. Whereas the SWD is generally very much appreciated as a working instrument, the acceptance accorded to the RSWK is not quite as good at least not in the public libraries. Here it is in particular the DB's failure to offer, as yet, a subject heading index for the belles-lettres and juvenile literature fields which is having a negative impact. Nor has the SWD paid adequate attention so far to the subject heading material required for these fields. Further desiderata were conventional alteration service to be established by the DB and a clearing center for the public libraries. For the university libraries, improved up-to-dateness in the inclusion of new subjects into the SWD and a clearer differentiation in the case of quasi-synonyms were at the top of the list of wishes to the SWD editing bureaus.

The establishment of a clearing office for the public libraries is not a task of priority for the DB, nor will a sys-

tem for granting individual libraries reading access to the SWD have to be provided by the DB, but rather by the central offices of interested library associations. Reflections on a further refinement of the SWD classification system will likewise be put on the back burner for the time being. Absolute priority should be given to the administration and continuous updating of the SWD and, in the longer run, to participation by further library associations in the SWD once the personnel requirements involved have been fulfilled.

The papers read at the SWD Colloquy will presumably become publicly available in spring 1990 as part of the materials of the German Library Institute (DBI), Berlin.

Magda Heiner-Freiling

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From Data Processing to Knowledge Management Report on Topical Area 1 of the 16th International Colloquy at Erfurt, GDR, 1989

"Information as an Efficiency Factor" (Effektivitätsfaktor Information) was the general topic, divided into Topical Areas 1 thru 4, of the 16th International Colloquy held from 18-21 December 1989, at Erfurt, East Germany, organized by the INER Institute of the Technical University of Ilmenau and its Director, Prof.Dr.Felix WEBER. In Topical Area 1, 27 papers were presented, on which the following summary report, as translated below from the German, was delivered at the concluding session by Area chairman Prof.Dr.Erich MATER.

Under the overall motto "From Data Processing to Knowledge Management", the sequence of papers read in this Topical Area 1 was subdivided into 3 thematic sections, with Section 1 investigating linguistic information (text structure, semantics, automatic content analysis), Section 2 the formalized presentation of information (factual information, relations, rules), and Section 3, finally, the machine processing of such formalized information (expert systems, learning algorithms, knowledge management). A panel discussion on the prospects of knowledge management concluded this Topical Area while simultaneously opening up a view of future developments and the tasks resulting therefrom.

The introductory paper read on Section 1, Linguistic Information, presented fundamental considerations on the information concepts, on its function in scientific communication, and on the communication of human knowledge (BONITZ). Questions of the condensation of information, also with a view to its machine processing, were examined in a paper on the function of abstracts, including patent specification abstracts, whose optimal structure from an information retrieval point of view was also paid attention to (WEBER). Significant content and its transformation into pattern and/or measurable structures was likewise the target of a paper dealing with the semantic distance between characteristics (semes) within a word field with an eye to retrievable groups of statements (DIETZE). The chief objectives of automatic content description as well as a number of possible methods for breaking up, in the computer, semantic text information into structured character sequences were treated in a

paper which simultaneously concluded this Section (MATER).

Section 2 dealt essentially with two key subjects, namely the description of the practical utilization of existing factographic systems (POETZSCH, GÜNTHER, LALYUSHKO, SCHMIDT) as well as the problems of how to transform data banks of factographic information systems into a knowledge base for expert systems (SCHELLEER, LETZ, GASCH). This second focal point, as well as the manner of dealing with the problems presenting themselves in the transition from factographic to expert systems, were particularly worthy of note here. The analysis of knowledge structures of factographic systems (SCHELLEER, LETZ), the optimization of inference mechanisms (GASCH), the complexity of task setting (LALYUSHKO, SCHMIDT) and finally its openness or opening-up towards new tasks imposed by practice (GÜNTHER) were each based on already available practical experience, while nevertheless illustrating an in-depth theoretical approach. All speakers clearly showed that the construction of factographic information systems is a necessary stage and indispensable prerequisite for the construction of knowledge management systems.

The paper marking the start of Section 3 and dealing with knowledge base elaboration presented research results pertaining particularly to text analysis with the aim of automatic generation of abstracts within pre-defined frames whose slots are filled with the aid of the given coordinate system and text grammar. To this end it is necessary to first of all permit the building-up, concerning text constituents, of generic classes from which to determine afterwards the chief subjects and finally the concrete subject information, which will generally be of a factographic nature. The pertinent speaker also presented a highly interesting overview of information-scientific training in West Germany (KUHLEN). The next paper started out with a discussion of the interaction between information science and computer science. This led to a delineation of definitions of human vs. machine knowledge. Using this as a basis for the design of knowledge management systems, the speaker elucidated the various steps involved (KILLENBERG). Valuable theoretical insights as well as practical experiences were conveyed by a paper on how to develop factographic systems into expert systems. The author's unconventional ideas were in essential conformity with the insights gained at INER (ZAVADA). Problems of knowledge transformation in the development of geological expert systems were presented in a further paper dealing with the suitable modeling of geological knowledge in the interest of discovering and opening-up gas and oil deposits (SEYFUL-MULUKOV). The description of a learning algorithm for the updating of medical knowledge bases for an expert system attracted much attention. Despite the specialized application field it became evident in how well-thought-out a fashion this system, applied in practical diagnostics, had been conceived (SCHÜLER). A learning algorithm was likewise reported on by a student at our institute who presented her procedure for the relevance evaluation of patent specification abstracts, submitted

by her as her master's thesis after having been tried out in practice (MÄHL). A further paper dealt with the modeling of the cognitive information-retrieval process. Various user groups were characterized according to their levels of knowledge and the requirements on information systems resulting therefrom, with the following essential components being elaborated in this connection: conceptional knowledge, information retrieval knowledge, and the user requirements model (JANKOWSKI). In a jointly prepared paper the control transfer in a system of machine communication partners was presented. Such transfer involves the expansion of data-bank systems by intelligent components. Via a control module functioning like a dispatcher, various communication partners are called up. These partners are program modules that can be activated and, depending on their function, be erased again by the dispatcher (JAROSH, MÜLLER).

The concluding panel discussion was marked decisively by the preceding paper on epistemological problems of artificial intelligence (MEYER). From various points of view machine inference processes were compared with mental recognition and knowledge processes, with future computer developments being taken into consideration just as well as human speech and thought processes, questions of inherited and acquired knowledge, pattern recognition, learning processes and reductions of complex knowledge structures. The discussion was animated throughout, most varied and generally conducted with high personal engagement.

Erich Mater

UDC Seminar

The 5th Nordic UDC Seminar took place on 2-4 Oct. 1989 at the Royal School of Librarianship, Copenhagen: The seminar was organized by the Danish UDC Committee, with 50 participants drawn from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The purpose of the seminar was to continue and develop the Nordic cooperation in the use of the UDC as a system of classification. The themes of the seminar were: 1. Applications of the UDC and possibly other classification systems in on-line library catalogues, 2. UDC education in the Nordic countries.

The programme was as follows:

- Revision work in FID (P.D. Strachan, FID),
- Orientation on the teaching of the UDC at the Nordic library schools and in Nordic literary organizations (M. Benito, Boras; E. Hjortsæter, Oslo; S. Engel, Copenhagen; E. Helin, Helsinki).
- Do librarians doing practical work in the circulation departments know enough about the UDC? (H. Skarbak, Roskilde).
- Use of the UDC in online library catalogues (K.J. Petersen, Trondheim; J. Hakala, Helsinki; F. Joergensen, Lyngby; B. Lau, Roskilde; V. Palmgren, Espoo; D. Holse & L. Buch, Copenhagen; H. Pedersen, Copenhagen),
- Working groups with practical online searching in Nordic library catalogues (I.K. Hansen, Copenhagen),
- Discussion of subject-searching facilities in online catalogues,
- 'Paradoks' indexing versus classification (C. Poulsen, Copenhagen),
- Is there a need for a common Nordic UDC edition? (M. Benito, Boras),
- Summing-up.
- Visit to the National Technological Library of Denmark (Lyngby) with special attention to the library's education of users.

(Report published in FID News Bull. 39(1989) No. 11, p. 80)

British Classification Research Group, 274th Meeting

The meeting took place on December 7, 1989 at University College London with 10 members present. Mr. MILLS opened the discussion by presenting a revised version of the Bliss Classification Class AY/AZ General Science and Technology and by explaining the revised scheme of Class A Philosophy which is followed by Formal Science at AK, then Logic, Mathematics and Statistics at AL/AK and with Science and Technology in general at AY. Under AZA – Systems, Communication and Control two major categories, AZB – Systems, Systemology and Information Theory were placed. The draft of the scheme had been added to the minutes. The discussions treated the position of these fields, especially also the one of Standardization, Management of Sci/Tech Activity and Projects, Cybernetics, Information Technology, etc. A warning voice maintained that subordination by purpose distributed everything and collated nothing. The same voice pointed out critically at the end his surprise how infrequently the Group resorted to formal facet analysis and discussed the principles of division defining an array, when confronted by difficulties.

Revision of UDC Class 1

The Classification Department of FID is sending out an international appeal for collaboration to revise UDC Class 1 Philosophy. Interested parties are invited to contact the Chairman of the UDC Coordinating Revision Committee III at the address below.

At the Institute of Scientific, Technical and Economic Information (IINTE) in Warsaw, Poland, work has been recently started on the elaboration of the new scheme of UDC 1 Philosophy. This scheme is being developed using the numbers 100.1/.9 – in future it will be possible to replace these numbers by 11/19. A preliminary outline of the new scheme has been sent to the FID Classification Department. The task is very challenging, and international cooperation will be heartily welcomed. All persons and institutions interested in the revision of UDC 1 are requested to contact Dr. E. Scibor, Chairman of the UDC Coordinating Revision Committee (CRC) III Humanities, Art. Address: IINTE, Jasna 14/16, PL-00-041 Warsaw, Poland.

Classification of Philosophy

A new classification scheme for Philosophy was the subject of a talk at the British Department of Health, London, December 15, 1989. Mr. Ken Bell, lecturer in the School of Information Studies at the Polytechnic of North London and compiler of the new scheme discussed problems in the classification of philosophy in relation to the Bliss Bibliographic Classification of which his scheme is a part. The new philosophy classification will be part of Class A: Philosophy and Mathematics, to be published in 1990. Further details from: Chris Preddle, Hon. Secretary, Bliss Classification Association (BCA), 53 Hampden Road, Hornsey, London, N8 0HX, England.

14th Annual Meeting Gesellschaft für Klassifikation eV

A preliminary program of this conference of the German Society for Classification to be held from March 12-14, 1990 at the Marburg University has been issued in January. Some 80 papers have been arranged in 26 sessions, predominantly in the area of numerical taxonomy. The conference has been put under the overall topic: "Information – Data – Knowledge – Classification and Structuring". Special stress has been laid on topics in the area of the arts, archeology and prehistory on the one hand and medicine on the other hand. This conference precedes and overlaps in part (in a plenary session on March 14 on "Classification, Systematics and Evolution") with the Conference of the German Chapter of the Biometric Society. For further information contact: Prof. Dr. Peter Ihm, Institut für medizinische Biometrie, Philipps-Universität, Bunsenstr. 3, D-3550 Marburg.

European Conference on Library Automation & Networking

The European Foundation for Library Cooperation (EFLC) announced this conference to be held from May 9-11, 1990 at Brussels. Early registrations indicated that its topic "New Tools for a New Identity" might gather at least some 500 participants. The program includes as a major discussion point the CEC Draft Plan of Action for Libraries in the European Communities. Networking, Cooperative Library Systems, Data and Access will be topics of papers and discussion. For any further information contact: A.M.M., rue du Trône 215, B-1050 Bruxelles, Belgium.

British Classification Society, Meetings 1990

Two meetings are planned for 1990: On June 15, the Annual General Meeting will be held at the British Museum of Natural History including a tour of the museum. In October 1990, a joint meeting with the Royal Statistical Society, Multivariate Study Group is foreseen to be held on "Classification in Chemistry". Further information is available from Dr. S.E. Hitchcock, Secretary, British Classification Society, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, England.

First International Conference of ISKO

The newly founded International Society for Knowledge Organization will hold its first conference from August 14-17, 1990 at Darmstadt near Frankfurt on "Tools of Knowledge Organization and the Human Interface". This conference is cosponsored by the German Chapter of ISKO and the German Society for Documentation's Committee on Classification and Thesaurus Research. The preliminary program is included in ISKO News 2 of this issue, please turn to the next page. Registration forms are available from the ISKO General Secretariat at Woogstr. 36a, D-6000 Frankfurt 50, Tel. 069-52 36 90, FAX 069-52 05 66.