
Reports and Communications

IFLA-Section on Classification and Indexing. Annual Report 1988/89

Developments between Conferences

The Section's presentation at the 1988 Brighton Conference by Nancy Williamson, "Classification Online: Present and Future", appeared in "International Cataloguing and Bibliographic Control" as did Robert P. Holley's account of Section activities, "Report of the work of the Section on Classification and Indexing 1987-88". A report on Section activities also appeared in "International Classification". In June, the Section sent out its annual Newsletter to the 68 Section members, and to others with interests in classification and indexing.

Working Group on "Guidelines for Subject Authority Files"

The Working Group on "Guidelines for Subject Authority Files" made significant progress over the past year. The North American members of the Working Group and Standing Committee met at the Library of Congress in Washington for a full day, 11 January 1989, after the American Library Association Conference. Barbara KELM, WG Chair, was also able to attend from the Federal Republic of Germany. During the next two months, each member of this smaller group completed a section for the draft version. Barbara Kelm sent out the draft version for European review. Several North American members met again after the American Library Association Annual Conference in July to make further revisions.

The Working Group met on 20 August during the 1989 Conference. The WG discussed the written comments that had been forwarded as part of the review. The members were able to arrive at basic agreement on almost all issues. The remaining conceptual difficulty is finding appropriate notation to express relationships among subject terms. This notation must accommodate thesauri constructed according to international standards and mixed systems such as "Library of Congress Subject Headings". Elaine SVENONIUS volunteered to write a position paper with an evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the various alternatives. The WG approved expanding membership to include representatives from the newly elected members of the Section's Standing Committee. The WG intends to have the final document ready for external review by the close of the 1990 IFLA Conference.

Meetings

The Section had one professional paper session and two meetings of the Standing Committee at the Paris 1989 Annual Conference. In addition, Robert P. HOLLEY, Section Chairperson, presented a "Report from the Section on Classification and Indexing" at the Division of Bibliographic Control Open Forum. The Open Meeting on Tuesday, August 22, 1989 had record attendance as an estimated 230 filled a large conference room. Marcia BATES (Los Angeles, CA) proposed "Designing Online Catalog Subject Access to Meet User Needs". Suzanne JOGUELET (Lyon, France) next spoke on the subject approach to information in France with "L'accès par sujets et le marché de l'information en France". Finally Joyce E. BUTCHER (London, UK) gave a paper, co-authored with Ross TROTTER, on "Building on PRECIS Strategies for Online Subject Access in the British Library".

At its first meeting on 19 August, the Standing Committee received the financial report and reviewed developments since the Sydney Conference. The eligible members unanimously elected Dorothy MCGARRY (USA) as Chairperson and Donna DUNCAN (Canada) as Secretary/Treasurer. Nancy WILLIAMSON will write a report on her completed section project to study the Library of Congress Classification. After hearing a report on the activities of the Section Working Group, the SC next discussed possible papers for the 1990 Stockholm Conference. Since the Stockholm Conference will pay increased attention to Third World concerns, the Section will invite a speaker on issues in classification and indexing in developing countries. The second paper will follow the Section's tradition of treating subject access in the host country's region.

The SC meeting on 24 August discussed WG developments during the Paris Conference and heard a report from Werner STEPHAN on developments in subject access at the Deutsche Bibliothek.

Workshop on the 20th Edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification

The Section also sponsored a "Workshop on the 20th Edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification" on Thursday, 24 August, 1989. The morning sessions concentrated on the theoretical aspects of DDC. Russell SWEENEY (Leeds, UK) gave the keynote speech, "An overview of the international use of the Dewey Decimal Classification". Richard GARDNER (Montréal, Canada) led a panel discussion on translating DDC into various languages. Mohammed M. AMAN (Milwaukee, USA) and Shawky SALEM (Kuwait) treated "The use of the DDC in the Arab world". Daniele DANESI (Florence, Italy) described "Translating Dewey in Italian". Annie BETHERY (Nanterre, France) concluded this section with her talk on "L'utilisation en France de la Classification Decimale de Dewey". Julianne BEALL (Washington, DC) treated the "International aspects of DDC20". Paule ROLLAND-THOMAS (Montréal, Canada) concluded the morning session with the "Dewey Decimal Classification, Edition 20: A critical review".

The afternoon session concentrated on practical matters. Joan S. MITCHELL (Pittsburgh, USA) had the task of giving a paper on the "Dewey Decimal Classification, Edition 20: an overview of the changes". Julianne BEALL then returned to explain "The new computer science schedule". Russell SWEENEY did the same for music in his "Grande Messe des 780's (with apologies to Berlioz)".

Papers presented:

Marcia J. BATES: Designing Online Catalog Subject Access to Meet User Needs.

More and more research evidence is demonstrating that people think about and describe subjects, and search by subject in catalogs, in dramatically different ways from what librarians have always assumed. For example, a group of people describing a subject or searching by subject almost invariably produce a very large number of different terms for a given topic, and even the most frequent of these terms constitutes a minority of all the descriptions of the topic. Yet subject cataloging systems are based on the assumption that people can produce and use one of a small handful of approved terms or cross references. This research evidence explains some of the well-documented problems users have had with subject searching in catalogs. Now that we have much greater flexibility in the design of catalogs in the online environment, we have the opportunity to design online catalogs and the catalog search interface to meet user needs and psychological characteristics much better than has been possible before now. The research evidence regarding subject searching is first reviewed in this article. Then a number of suggestions are made for improvements in the design of online subject catalog interfaces to match the characteristics of user search behavior. In particular, a "Superthesaurus" is proposed, i.e., an online user thesaurus, which is designed to assist users in moving from their initial search term to the actual Library of Congress Subject Headings or other subject indexing terms used in the catalog.

Suzanne JOUGUELET: Subject Access and the Marketplace for Bibliographic Information in France

The concept of a marketplace now applies to bibliographic records. The recent "Master Plan for Bibliographic Information" speaks in the economic terms of supply and demand. Who are currently the producers in the French marketplace? Under what conditions do they distribute their records? To what extent is the subject access to these records adequate for user needs? The needs of the professional librarian should not replace those of the user. The purpose remains successful searching by the end user.

Joyce Elaine BUTCHER, Ross TROTTER: Building on PRECIS: Strategies for Online Subject Access in the British Library.

Central to the British Library's Cataloguing Action Plan are two aims: 1) to reduce the costs of its cataloguing operations and 2) to achieve compatibility of access to its records both current and retrospective in an automated catalogue environment. A new approach to subject cataloguing is planned to make a significant contribution to these aims.

This paper describes the work currently being investigated and developed in the British Library to build on PRECIS (PReserved Context Index System) to achieve effective subject control and access to its bibliographic records whilst reducing the costs of its cataloguing operations. Robert P. Holley

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Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 48202, USA
in Deutsch. Orig. de. Köln-41, (Lindenburger Allee 44) 1981. 8p.

ASIS Annual Meeting

Papers on classification and thesauri were much in evidence at the ASIS Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., Oct. 30 to November 2, 1989. SIG/CR, the Special Interest Group on Classification Research, sponsored one

meeting and cosponsored seven others at that conference. Among the topics covered were progress in conversion of classification to machine readable form, the revision of the NISO standards for thesaurus construction, and research into the compatibility of subject access to biomedical information systems. Hypertext for improved subject access and the thesaural requirements for an intermediary expert system were also topics of concern, as were faceted classification in tomorrow's information systems as well as classification and computing. In a program on "The information science and technology knowledge base: Who controls it?" the speakers took a critical look at library and information science access to its own body of literature, through the history and background (Marjori HLAVA), bibliographic access to the literature (Candy SCHWARTZ), and quality of access (Nancy NORTON and Bonnie CARROLL). Also David BATTY reported on a project to create a library and information science thesaurus. "Image classification research: new strategies and techniques" was also a subject for discussion. It would seem that classification is very much alive and well in the design and development of online systems.

Nancy Williamson

CRG 272

The 272nd meeting of the Classification Research Group was held at University College London on July 14, 1989 with 13 persons present. Discussions were concerned with the position of the CRG with respect to a new policy of the British Library communicated to them in a letter before the meeting, which showed that the Library would in the future be favouring verbal access as against using the capabilities of classificatory structures. Mr. NELSON wondered how the ideas of CRG members could make an effect on institutions like the British Library or on the commercial sector. He noticed that there was no large scale successful online host offering classification for retrieval purposes. Two aspects of classification in relation to retrieval concerned him: (1) how to display a classification structure online, as on a printed page? and (2) can one use a classification structure to help put questions to a hidden store? He invited the Group to consider how classification could contribute to computer-based information handling. He pointed also to the user's problem by raising the value of notation. In an online situation it is only possible to search via the notation. Schemes such as the Bliss Classification do not permit this. Therefore one should rather reproduce the structure and slot individual items into it. The meeting concluded with proposals for research topics such as to find out the degree of detail that was useful in a classification system, the value of structure, etc., also possibilities of using a three dimensional display on a screen. Some functional application for this, however, would be needed.

CRG 273

At the 273rd meeting of the Classification Research Group, held at University College London on Oct. 26, 1989 with 15 persons present, Prof. B. C. VICKERY spoke "On the use of faceted classification in interfaces

to online search, such a Tome Searcher". He and his wife had become interested in developing software interfaces for searching systems which incorporate a much greater amount of knowledge than normal, e.g. the structure of the terminology of the subject. He had turned to classification in order to see how the use of categories/facets/classes could be used to assist in the solution of the problems. Thus, using a microcomputer they built a prototype interface to a local database. The results were taken up by a small firm: Tome Associates. A commercial product, "Tome Searcher" to access online databases was developed. Prof. Vickery explained the methodology using a diagram that he had circulated to the CRG members present, which, however, represented only one particular use made of the ideas involved, namely searching. He spoke also on the use made of classification, of the dictionary in the form of a thesaurus, and of categories. Problems were found with compound terms and unknown terms. For them the user could be asked to state the category to which they belong. Finally he dealt with the modification of search statements to be introduced either before or after an online search. - The next CRG meeting was fixed for Dec. 7, 1989.

DGD/KTF 44th Meeting

On Sept. 25, 1989, the Committee on Classification and Thesaurus Research of the German Documentation Society (DGD/KTF) met at DGD in Frankfurt with 13 persons present. The program for future activities was discussed and elections held. Dr. Winfried SCHMITZ-ESSER was reelected chairman, Mr. Ernst LUKAS was elected vice-chairman. Concerning the program it was decided (1) to hold a preconference Workshop in Darmstadt on Thesaurus Software, Aug. 13 and/or 14, 1990 (to precede the ISKO 1st International Conference - see ISKO News 1), (2) to contribute some papers to the meeting on Concept Relationships organized by Prof. Dr. R. Wille, Darmstadt, March 9-11, 1990 and (3) to contribute also to the special section on Documentation Languages and Ordering of Knowledge of the Conference on Terminology and Knowledge Engineering, Oct. 2-4, 1990 at Trier.

In the afternoon session, Mr. Lukas introduced into the Software INDEX for the construction of thesauri and multilingual dictionaries. It runs under VMS and will also be applicable with UNIX. There were three further presentations by Dr. Jochen GANZMANN, Frankfurt, Mr. Klaus RITZLER, Hamburg, and Ms. Dorothee SICK, Saarbrücken who extended each on Criteria for the Evaluation of Thesaurus Software.

Conference on Concept Relationships

In continuing a conference series started in Jan. 1986 on Concept Analysis (see the proceedings volume by Ganter/Wille/Wolff: Beiträge zur Begriffsanalyse, Mannheim 1987), an invitation was released for a conference on Concept Relationships to be held on March 9-11, 1990 at the Mathematical Institute of the Darm-

stadt Technical University. Experts and researchers from the fields of information and cognition sciences are invited to hand in proposals for papers to the address given below. Prior to the conference, an introductory course on formal concept analysis is envisaged by the Research Group "Concept Analysis" of the Mathematical Institute.

For further information please contact: Prof. Dr. Rudolf Wille, FB Mathematik, Technische Hochschule, D-6100 Darmstadt (Tel. 06151/163415).

2nd Call for Papers, TKE'90

From Oct. 2-4, 1990, the Association for Terminology and Knowledge Transfer, Trier and Infoterm, Vienna, will organize its second international congress on "Terminology and Knowledge Engineering. Applications". It is supported by some 19 organizations and institutions. The second call invites papers to be presented in the following sections: 1) Terminology and knowledge theory, knowledge engineering - New applications; 2) Knowledge-based systems; 3) Natural language processing and knowledge engineering; 4) Documentation languages and ordering of knowledge; 5) Electronic dictionaries; 6) Descriptive terminology knowledge engineering in the social sciences and humanities; 7) Information management in organizations; 8) Computer support in technical communication; 9) Terminology and knowledge transfer tools.

Keynote lectures have been announced as follows: G. ENGEL, H. PICHT: New professional profiles in knowledge engineering and knowledge transfer. - A. MELBY: Terminology and technical documents: The importance and limitation of formal systems. - E. OESER: Terminology science and knowledge theory. Report of the pre-conference in Vienna, September 1990. - F. RIGGS: Descriptive terminology for the social sciences. - M. SCHAAR: Multilingual information and knowledge management. - D. WALKER: Lexical resources for the management of massive text files.

A number of workshops in the framework of the Congress as well as 2 meetings in conjunction with it have also been announced in this 2nd Call. They will be on the following topics with their organizers in brackets: (1) Large terminological databanks - Common problems and co-operation (M. Williams, Canada); (2) Terminology and knowledge engineering: New professional profiles, teaching and training (G. Engel, Denmark); (3) Multilingualism, terminology and translation (G. Muskens, ECCSID); (4) (Tutorial) Multilingual information and knowledge management for commercial cooperation (M. Schaar, Stuttgart); (5) Problems of ethnicity terminology (Sept. 29-30) (F. Riggs, Honolulu); (6) Meeting of managers of large terminological data banks (to be held in Luxembourg) (M. Williams).

Chairmen of the Congress: Prof. Dr. H. Czap and Prof. Dr. B. Rieger, Universität Trier, PF 3825, D-5500 Trier. Steering Committee: Infoterm, P.O. Box 130, A-1021 Wien, Austria.