EDITORIAL

Towards Compatibility and Cooperation in Classification

Each year the American Society for Information Science awards a prize for the best student paper in the field of information science. Last year it was granted to *Linda Smith* of Georgia Institute of Technology for an outstanding investigation in the field of compatibility studies. This paper called attention once more to a problem already tackled some time ago, which, however has been in the focus of reflection again since the UNISIST Study Report of 1971 underlined the future need of convertible thesauri and indexing languages. With the growing trend toward networking information systems a new concern for standardized terminology and for a common understanding and use of indexing terms may be observed. Right now this looks like a second big wave which has been slowly getting under way; the first one appeared already back in 1959 when in Cleveland, Ohio *Senator Humphrey* opened an international conference for Standards on a Common Language for Machine Searching and Translation. This wave collapsed very soon for a number of reasons, one of them being the exploding development in computing machinery itself. Less than ten years later, the Intermediate Lexicon idea was born within the *"Gardin-Group"* in Marseille (1968) and brought into the UNISIST program as a tool for introducing a "switching circle" between indexing languages. Through the efforts of *Eric Coates* in England a first investigation on the feasibility of such a Lexicon in the field of information science was carried out (see the review on *Verina Horsnell's* study in this issue as well as her announcement, pp. 46 and 54). Similar studies have been undertaken in Poland by *Jachowicz* and in Germany by *Wersig* et al. There have also been other approaches to the same problem, e. g. through the creation of macrothesauri *(M. Wolff-Terroine)* or of a universal source thesaurus *(Soergel)*. It was our intention to present the scope of the problems involved in this issue in order to find the common grounds of indexing languages and to assemble a number of papers, reports and reviews dealing with just this topic of compatibility. But somehow we did not succeed: the articles we had been asking and looking for did not come in, instead a number of other acticles were received unsolicitedly and we had to give up our previous plans. We do hope that the problems are challenging enough and will be considered so urgent as to demand a serious confrontation, discussion and efforts towards solution so that we will be able to see and learn more about them in future issues.

In January 1975 – after a ten years' pause – a "milestone-event" in classification took place: the FID/CR Conference in Bombay, for many of us the first and large scale encounter with Indian classification philosophy and thought. Reports on this conference are included in this issue as well as the Conclusions and Recommendations as collected from the conference participants and edited by a small panel including mainly Profs. *Neelameghan, de Grolier, Atherton* and *Samuelson.*

One of the direct consequences of this conference was a cooperation agreement concerning the collaboration of FID/CR with the Editors of INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION. From 1975 on, the journal will be co-sponsored by FID/CR. Consequently we agreed on cooperation in a "mutually exclusive" editing of the FID/CR NEWSLETTER and I. C. so as to insure that the quarterly Newsletter will from now on inlude mainly

(1) Short reports on CR meetings in all countries
(2) Reports about research projects in classification
(3) Reports on national developments in classification
(4) Revision work reports and updating data on the current universal classification systems
(5) A calender of forthcoming meetings in classification.

INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION, on the other hand, will concentrate on current problems through articles, previews on forthcoming basic publications, book reviews and the current bibliography.

In this issue we had to digress into a number of problems: we started with *Otto Gekeler's* comments on W. M. Paass' findings concerning product characteristics. This very basic problem for our macro- and micro-economies needs our full attention and assistance. Although the article is only in German we suppose that the problems are recognized in orther countries as well; hopefully the follow-up article on a system of product characteristics by O. Gekeler will be in English.
The unique work described by *Tomita* and *Hattori* presenting the methods in establishing a thesaurus serving as a retrieval tool to the "Taikei", a 25-volume-history of Japanese science and technology of the last 100 years proves among other things that concepts and their descriptors – if used retrospectively – are not as varying over a longer period of time as usually assumed. The authors applied their retrieval tools to demonstrate influential events in Japanese history, thus relating classification work to clarification of historical developments. The article by *Kashyap* tackles again another problem: the teaching and comprehension of concepts. Kashyap exemplifies this by the teaching of classification using Ranganathan's definitions of this concept field.

Haendler's article gives a theoretical foundation for indexing information on at least two levels of specificity: the level of the subject-fields to which a document/an information may belong and the level of the possible statements (propositions) evolving from subject analysis. These distinctions have been successfully applied in the new AGRIS organization. It would probably be very useful to see the same methods applied to some other subject-areas as well. This might also promote the UNISIST/FID efforts toward establishing a Broad System of Ordering.

And here we are back, confronted with the conditions for establishment of compatibility. We look forward to your cooperation and contributions regarding the problems involved.

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