

variety of formats, and many more). However, this discussion goes partly far beyond the scope of the book (e.g. p. 266: "The minimal level of furniture a user needs is a comfortable chair, ...")

Finally, a chapter on "*Evaluation of Subject Retrieval in Online Catalogs*" gives a useful introduction to evaluation measures such as recall/precision and user effort (e.g. search commands used, number of descriptors selected, Boolean operators employed) and reports on the evaluation measures that were used by a number of relevant studies. It concludes with a short outline of evaluation methods such as transaction log analysis, observation and interview, questionnaires, simulation etc.

It is rather difficult to give a final judgement on this volume. As mentioned in the first paragraph of this review, this book is certainly an interesting one. Subject access in the online environment is a fascinating topic, and this volume touches many facets of that topic. Much of the material is well presented, also in a typographical sense (the book is almost free of typing errors). The book also contains a multitude of references to the literature (not all of them up-to-date) and a subject index (which I found not detailed enough; there is, for example, no entry for *citation order*, cf. p. 151 f.) On the other hand, this volume is probably not *the* comprehensive treatise on subject access in online catalogues that one would have liked to see. Although the authors have made the attempt to develop an integrative point-of-view their work does not show the degree of cohesiveness that is called for in the preface (p. xi). Furthermore, there is the problem with the target groups that was mentioned above. This book is surely too sophisticated for absolute beginners, but many qualified librarians could be bored with the amount of familiar material in it. Nevertheless, one can certainly recommend *Subject Analysis in Online Catalogs* as a textbook for library and information science classes. Library schools in German speaking countries should keep in mind that this book focuses exclusively on the bibliographic and subject access tools of the Anglo-American world.

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**NISKO'91. International Conference on Knowledge Organization, Terminology and Information Access Management.** Bratislava, May 13-16, 1991. Organized by the Czechoslovak Chapter of ISKO and the Micro CDS/ISIS Club. Bratislava: NISKO 1991. 192 p. (available via INDEKS Verlag, Frankfurt)

Reporting about the NISKO'91 conference has long been overdue for obvious reasons, apparent at first sight when one scans the details of the bibliographical entry. The data show that attempts are under way in a hitherto neglected geographical area, Centre and Eastern Europe, to join internationally standard research efforts in the domain of information access. The fact that many researchers from more advanced countries, representing higher level infor-

mation systems, participated underlies this view. It is not that an international conference was organized in Bratislava that should be emphasized but that a regional chapter of ISKO has been established and found the time appropriate to arrange a meeting of its own. It was a joint conference in the sense that wider state of the art reports, comparative survey of key areas, recommendations, theoretical elaborations by older ISKO regulars have been combined with mostly applicational contributions from Eastern European members. This highly eccentric view of an international scientific conference is, however, borne out by a mere glance at the contents pages where the distribution of sections and authors fully supports such an assumption. If it were not enough the chief organizer on the (still) Czechoslovakian side, Dr. Pavla Stancikova says it in plain words in the preface (p.4):

"Presentation of such technologies and applications ... and recommendations were very much welcome for the NISKO first international conference ... and will be considered a starting point for further research, developments and application in Czechoslovakia".

Beyond the obvious fact that the meeting, at least partly, was inspired by reasons of science policy one has to examine carefully what such a policy can professionally offer. The immediate and brief answer is that it can and in this case does contain high standard, serious contributions. When reviewing conference material two rules should be more or less rigorously observed. The first is that the reviewer should not be one of the participants (in this case he was not) which might contribute to a more balanced view about the intellectual content. The second is that some time ought to be allowed to pass between the conference and its review; as a rule which the current jam of material waiting to be published as well as reigning editorial policies make all the more easier to observe. The rationale behind this second restriction is to give the ideas unfolded at a conference a chance to prove that they have stood the test of time. The simultaneous publication and availability of the NISKO proceedings here under discussion certainly facilitated this requirement and while it comes as a pleasant surprise it should also be upheld as an example to be followed.

Critique of just about anything is usually divided into formal as well as substantial elements.

The former group is never easily dismissed but in this particular case the all too obvious defects have important - and negative - consequences.

Two serious omissions must be mentioned, both mock the main theme of the conference as expressed with capital letter catchword terminology on the title page: *Information Access Management*.

The first deficiency is that, for reasons of organization, Winfried Schmitz-Esser's *New Approaches in Thesaurus Application*, though indicated in the contents, is missing from the proceedings. This in itself would not be unusual in such compilations. It becomes disturbing only when, as it happened to the current reviewer, one manages to lay

hand on a copy and it turns out to be one of the best papers presented. Its lack is more than just regrettable, it makes the proceedings both bibliographically and, more to the point, professionally deficient.

(*Editors Note: The paper had not been available before the conference. It was published subsequently in Int. Classif. 18(1991) No.3, p.143-147*)

No less disconcerting is another laxity, also formal in nature but just as annoying, particularly for those who having consulted the papers are intent on hot pursuit and would want to make contact with the authors. It occurs all too often in this volume that we can find neither affiliation nor address going with an author's name. It is insufficient attention paid to the meticulous process of editing but a problem nonetheless, especially for those who wish to fashion a comprehensive view about the meeting. The matter is further compounded by the fact that no list of participants, with some supplementary information, is appended to this otherwise not too bulky tome.

(*Ed.: Conference participants received such a list*)

Having done with the bones we should now turn to the meat. Internal organization as mirrored by the contents pages divides the material according to the procedural frame: presentations of the plenary sessions and papers delivered in the two sections. Section 1 concentrates on theoretical as well as representational means of knowledge organization whereas Section 2 contains material pertaining mainly to terminology.

If sectional boundaries are lifted another, perhaps more useful, concept of division becomes possible. According to this, papers in the proceedings can be labelled to belong to one of the following three areas: comprehensive survey, presentations reporting research details, and applications. One can hardly escape the impression that in all three areas representatives with more advanced research background endeavoured to give a state of the art report on the one hand and ventured to set an agenda for the region, on the other. As the region is strong in theory and weak in application (due to the lack of technology on par with advanced nations) the survey type presentations (or plenary session papers) are by far the most important. While all are excellent, three contributions must be highlighted as trend setters. Ingetraut Dahlberg's *Knowledge Organization in the Nineties: Bases, Problems, Goals* serves as a kind of keynote address. The title is deceptive, it is not a policy statement in a conventional way but a succinct summary of the current state of knowledge organization done with an explicitly theoretical cutting edge and the spelling out of future goals, again with the primacy of conceptual grounding. The author states that clearly (p.12):

"Technology is advancing and is offered abundantly, but it is of not very much use if the conceptual or contents-related parts is not understood and taken care of in the most optimal way."

The real merit of the approach is that it emphasizes theoretical research not because "the grapes are sour", i.e. momentary lack of new technology in the region hardly supposes anything else, but because the base should be

sound before building on it and the newcomers had better learn from the mistakes of those who have been there before.

Galinski's *Terminology and Documentation - Text Management and the Universal Availability of Information and Knowledge* is another fine example of summing up recent developments. It is more technical in orientation but it gives invaluable definitions of basic concepts and settles issues like e.g. free text vs. indexing language information systems with textbook clarity. His conceptual frame is wired throughout with the requisite technological potentialities. The third outstanding paper, still of a comprehensive nature, is Winfried Schmitz-Esser's *New Approaches in Thesaurus Application*. This is a truly clearcut reappraisal of thesaural functions and capabilities in the light of new technologies. If the field is properly handled a new type of thesaurus could emerge and the idea as well as its realization can enjoy a revival (although I was not aware that it was dead). In many ways it is the best paper presented, especially if the theme and function of the conference is kept in mind. (*Ed.: Concerning its placement, please see above.*)

From the domain of research results and applications the one possibly of much utility for the participants is Claus Ritzler's *Comparative Study of PC-supported Thesaurus Software*. The paper provides very exact information on the comparative level of three software packages (one British and two German) in tabulated, readily accessible form. The software products discussed show different degrees of sophistication (and of course capabilities), a property which suits the wide range of interested parties and responds at the same time to a differentiated scale of requirements and anticipations, research and application functions.

Finally, a gem of original theoretical research which is, strangely, placed in Section 2 on Terminology and Information Access. The paper in question is Jela Steinerova's *Cognitive Structures in Information Systems*, which, without the least intention of devaluing the meeting, deserves a more visible place within the body of published literature than in an unindexed and not easily accessible conference proceedings volume. While the topic has been lately rather fashionable, even close to becoming a fad within information science, few really genuinely good works have appeared. What makes this presentation extremely valuable and attractive for the reader of this journal is the author's approach from the conceptual and cognitive end of knowledge organization, which is our stock in trade, towards an improved perspective of modern information systems based on new technology.

It is a commonplace that conference materials in technically oriented areas suffer from the danger of rapid obsolescence. Apart from a few papers tied up with concrete and thus changing applicational themes that might conceivably have been superseded (actual database and software use, etc.) the bulk of what is written here is still valid and usable, and only shortage of space prevents a more detailed analysis.

Though lack of an internal index as well as the likelihood that the publication as a whole has not been indexed by our secondary services network, impairs the chances of information access management advertised on the title page it should be considered as a strong recommendation that those who take the trouble of buying (e.g. through INDEKS) or locating it in a document collection may find the effort worthwhile.

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HERMES, H.-J., HAVEKOST, H.(Eds.): **Die Systematik im OPAC: über das Instrumentarium zum Ordnen und Wiederfinden** (The use of Classification Systems in OPACs: On the Instruments Available for Ordering and Retrieval). Papers presented at the Working Groups on Library Science of the 16th Annual Convention of the Gesellschaft für Klassifikation, Dortmund 1992. Oldenburg: Library and Information System of the Oldenburg University 1993. 162p. ISBN 3-8142-0432-8

Parallel to (hence separate from) the institutionalized library field, but with numerous interested librarians participating, there exist various councils and societies which, among numerous other things, continuously give attention to questions of contents description at libraries - even if no substantial sponsoring funds are available for this work and if the results obtained do not always find reflection in the rigidly structured fields of library operations. These organizations include e.g. the German Standardization Institution DIN; the Committee for Thesaurus and Classification Research of the German Documentation Society, DGD/KTF; the International Society for Knowledge Organization ISKO with its German Section; and the Society for Classification, GfKI. At the 1992 annual convention of the latter society in Dortmund a special part of the program was devoted to questions of classificatory subject description in libraries. The relevant papers read are presented here in a special publication on this convention.

Although not all papers of the volume reviewed here deal with the use of classification systems in OPACs, a generally quite readable collection is offered here such as otherwise can be obtained only through rounding up widely scattered papers on the subject from various publications. In the germanophone parts of the world the present publication is at this time unique.

The series of papers is led off by B.LISCHEWSKY-WEISER of the Cologne municipal library with a paper which gave the entire book its title: *The use of classification systems in OPACs*. For all those not yet intimately familiar with the subject, this contribution offers a readable and useful introduction, clarifying on the one hand the complexity of the problems involved and on the other hand showing possible solutions oriented to concrete library practice and presenting actually realized examples. An accompanying list of more detailed literature, expanded below by a few English-language texts, is undoubtedly most helpful.

The second contribution by G.GREINER entitled *Facet Systems* endeavors to show the importance and possible use of the analytic-synthetic classification systems for subject description and retrieval. The approach he uses is not so much of a theoretical methodical nature, but rather marked by the presentation of a great many examples. Be it noted here supplementarily that the particular usefulness of this classification method for the construction of retrieval systems was proven by the present reviewer in a recent article, while a thorough and more detailed introduction to the facet classification method has been offered by B.Buchanan.

Another subject, that of classification for book arrangement purposes, is treated by B.LORENZ in his contribution on *Reflections on classification systems for book arrangement purposes*. Not dealing primarily with structural questions, he emphasizes first of all, in a historical analysis, the special importance of systematic book arrangement in library practice, following this up with a description of specific pertinent developments in libraries in German-speaking countries.

H.-J.HERMES reported on the current state of the work on the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC, DK) and in particular on the organizational changes that have taken place in recent years within the FID and DIN. Of particular importance for the German interests in this domain is undoubtedly the termination of DIN's leading role in this field in 1991 and the taking-over of this task by a working group for Decimal Classification with the Society for Classification, which was formed in the course of the Dortmund convention, as well as the question of having the UDC publishing board expanded by a German representative.

The use - not readily intelligible to outsiders - of classification systems by Die Deutsche Bibliothek (The German National Library) is described by W.TRAISER. Discussing salient points from the "Systematic Survey of all Subject Fields (=HJV/FJV (Semi-annual and Five-year Lists' Classification)", which is also used for the purposes of systematic characterization of keywords in the SWD (Keyword Documentation) in the tradition of the yellow and green pages of the HJV and FJV respectively - he gives attention to some problems resulting from the application of this instrument. In a second part Traiser presents considerations on using the Conspectus Classification, developed primarily for book purchase coordination, also for the SWD. A first test yielded no positive results.

Related to this same subject is the contribution by I.RECKER-KOTULLA: *The Dutch Basic Classification as an instrument of cooperative subject description*. In view of the discussion conducted elsewhere on the introduction of this classification at the libraries in Lower Saxony, Germany, this contribution by the translator of this classification into German is sure to command attention. For the subject concerned raises not only methodical questions, but also questions of library planning and policy, in which connection the levels of argumentation are, unfortunately, not always kept carefully apart. The auth-