

ressreports on "the development of the Basic Classification, its role within the Dutch system of cooperative subject description, its set-up and structure, and the part it might play in a future system of cooperative subject description in Lower Saxony". The idea of an allocation of tasks to various components of a larger subject-description system is lucidly worked out (keywords RSWK), Basic Classification notations, indications of time and geography, literary categories, persons, organizations), with these components not being co-extensively precombined in a document-specific way, but rather being made available individually for post-coordinating retrieval. From this reviewer's point of view the discussion suffered from the fact that it has not yet been sufficiently clarified what the interaction of the various PICA system components will look like in retrieval within an OPAC and that one bases oneself too much on (wishful?) planning concepts. Furthermore the idea of breaking apart the RSWK chains (RSWK = Rules for Subject Cataloguing) into individual retrievable components appears questionable as long as it has not yet been clarified how, by this procedure, exclusively retrievable elements with an individual semantic identity are to be generated.

That a linkage between a classificatory structure and keywords can be achieved in a wholly different manner as well has been known for a long time from the Eppelsheimer Method. How this method can be implemented and utilized for retrieval in an OPAC is shown by W. KOWALK in his contribution *The Saarbrücken Subject Catalogue according to the Eppelsheimer Method in the OPAC*. He presents a whole series of examples which make clear that this method need not be restricted to application in conventional catalogues, but that, on the contrary, suitable system design will permit still far more efficient retrieval. The question of the linkage of verbal with classificatory elements for objective access components in an OPAC is also touched upon by H. NOHR in his paper *Precombination of classificatory and verbal subject description data and its potential in information retrieval*. He, too, resorts to the Eppelsheimer Method for discussing, from a more methodical point of view, possibilities for subject querying, with tasks being allocated to verbal and systematic queries.

In a brief report entitled *Online catalogue of the Dortmund University Library*, B. JEDWABSKI and K. SCHRÖDER offer insights and reflections as to how the catalog data bank can, under the STAIRS retrieval system, be made suitable for querying by users at various points of the university library system, thus providing a pragmatic tool, to be replaced in future by a 'real' OPAC.

The conference volume is rounded off by a contribution by W. BIES entitled *Content description: an attempt at a library-scientific didactic approach*, which, although not strictly fitting to the title of the book, nevertheless should not be overlooked. While quite a lot has been written so far on training in this field, it has remained a problem field (probably not only for students) to this very day. Bies bases his observations not only on the training of future libra-

rians, but also - which makes them particularly readable - on experiences with teaching courses at Berlin Free University for students with library science as a minor subject. From the points of view of both form and setup the book may be regarded as excellently well done for a conference report (no typescripts!), with the only less convincing feature being the bipartition of the contributions into one chapter each on "ordering" and "Retrieval". This bipartition is neither justified by the contents of the contributions, nor can it be justified at all in a field where both concepts are as closely connected as they are in OPACs.

If one is interested in a rounding-off of the subject one will miss specific contributions on the application of the UDC in ETHICS of the Zürich ETH Institute of Technology or on the problems of store-bound keyword indexes for book arrangement classification systems and their use for online retrieval. Fortunately, however, each of these two subjects is briefly dealt with, and more detailed literature referred to, in B. Lischewsky-Weiser's introductory contribution. Let us, as a result, formulate the wish and the hope that a subject field like this one will, eventually, not only be treated in a conference of more or less accidental composition, but rather by a properly edited collective volume containing thematically well-balanced contributions. Concentrating, in conclusion, once again on the methodical requirements to be imposed on a classification system for use in an OPAC, one can only agree with W. Kowalk that:

A classification not specifically conceived for an automated library system, and even a classification that is automated from the very beginning, has methodologically immanent and application-related peculiarities that are inconvenient in an OPAC.

In other countries, too, the experience has been made in the use of classification systems in OPACs that different tasks require different tools, and the necessary conclusions have been drawn and implemented. Maybe the book presented here can contribute to giving weight to this view in Germany as well.

Winfried Gödert

Prof. W. Gödert, FHBD, Claudiussstr. 1, D-50678 Köln.

SATIJA, Mohinder Partap, COMAROMI, J.P.: **Beyond Classification: Book Numbers. With Special Reference to Chronological Book Numbers.** New Delhi: Ess Ess Publ. 1992. 115p., ISBN 81-70000-136-6

The first four chapters of "Beyond Classification", "Book Numbers: Introduction" (1-5), "Debate over the Usefulness of Book Numbers" (6-10), "History of Book Numbers" (11-32), and "Chronological Book Numbers: Pros and Cons" (33-36), analyze the theoretical and general problems of book numbers. Book numbers are not discussed as mere sequential accession numbers but defined as a vital "adjunct to the class numbers of a relative classification" (11). Far from being optional, book numbers provide "a fundamental organization of the classes of a library classification" (29) and function as "classification within

classification" (2). (Does the definition "classification within classification" agree with the statement suggested by the title that book numbers are "beyond classification" (2)?)

Book numbers are a constituent part of the equation "call number = collection number + class number + book number" (5) and so help to supply the books of a library with an individualizing and unique address. If the name of the author is made the basis of subarranging the items of a class, the resulting book number is called an alphabetical book number, if documents within a class are subarranged by the year of publication, the book number is called a chronological book number.

The authors favour chronological book numbers and are eager to list their advantages (p.33-35): their unambiguity, simplicity, straightforwardness, universality, mnemonic quality, and their ability to reflect the advancement of learning. Their disadvantages are mentioned, but underestimated. In the reviewer's opinion, however, they are major drawbacks and are likely to discourage most librarians from introducing chronological book numbers. They are mostly not fully developed and are tools of organization and display rather than of retrieval. They suit the arrangement of scientific and technical literature rather than the arrangement of fiction. Two books by the same author on the same subject are separated by chronological arrangement. Chronological book numbers are of no use to the closed access library.

Chapters 5-9 (p.37-89) deal with specific nineteenth- and twentieth-century chronological book numbering systems; they discuss the systems by W.S. Biscoe (1853-1933), James Duff Brown (1862-1914), Ranganathan (1892-1972), Fremont A. Rider (1885-1962), and William Stetson Merrill (1866-1969). Much space is devoted to the classifiers' and cataloguers' biographical backgrounds. Not all characterizations, however, are very sophisticated: Does Brown's pragmatism really ensue "from his lack of a full formal education" (p.47)?

Most assessments are refreshingly downright. Rider's dull system is called a "misbegotten scheme" (p.79) and a healthy scepticism prevails: "librarianship has an almost unblemished record of devising less round wheels than those that were handed down to it by preceding generations" (p.59) But is it fair to say that Stanley Jast's scheme of alphabetical author marks "shows that the British should avoid original thought in this regard" (p.21) and that "the minds at the Library of Congress have never been graced with a towering intelligence" (p.23)? On the other hand, the authors do not hide their sympathy with the "scientific and progressive spirit" (p.41) of nineteenth-century librarians. Biscoe's system is not denied the honour of representing "a pioneering method of the chronological arrangement of books" (p.45). Since Dr. Satija has written several books on Ranganathan, the reader is not surprised at the authors' high praise of Ranganathan's faceted system of book numbers, its facets being language, form (physical body), year of publication, supplements, volumes, copies and criticisms of a work (for a full discussion of Ranganathan's formula, including an analysis of the

role played by the accession part of the year number and the evaluation number, cf. p.62-70).

Sometimes the account of book numbering systems is rather longwinded and lengthy. What is, for example, the use of displaying on nine pages (p.50-58) the full table of Brown's numbering system ranging from the year 1450 (aa) to the year 2125 (zz)? Moreover, the essentials of chapters 5-9 have already been told in chapter 3 ("History of book numbers", p.11-32). The rather benevolent evaluation of Biscoe's system on p.41 contradicts the severe criticism of the limit of Biscoe's timetable, namely the year 1999, on p.20: "one wonders whether Biscoe thought the world would end at 2000" (p.20).

The book ends on a useful "Chronology of Book Numbers" (p.93-95) and an exhaustive bibliography (p.97-110) of book numbers. Many European publications and references, especially German ones, however, are missing. Only two addenda are mentioned here: Mälzer, Gottfried: Buchaufstellung und Signaturen. Würzburg: Universitätsbibliothek 1989; and Haller, Klaus: Katalogkunde: Formkataloge und formale Ordnungsmethoden. München etc.: Saur 1980. p.143-146. The authors do not negate the peripheral state of chronological book numbers - "a mostly ignored rival line to alphabetical book numbers" (Preface) - and they describe their history as a story of little acceptance and even less success: "chronological book numbers remain less popular than alphabetical author tables" (p.36). In view of the negligence of all book numbers - they face "a crisis of definition, of identity, of status, and of survival as an academic subject" (Preface) - the authors recall our attention to the fact that "without the history of book numbers, the history of library classification cannot be told completely" (p.30).

"Beyond Classification" - a welcome contribution to the theory of classification - is not a manual intended for the practitioner; its conceptual and historical value exceeds its practical value. It complements the two major books written on the subject: Lehnus, Donald J.: Book numbers: history, principles and application. Chicago: Amer. Libr. Assoc. 1980 ("an intimate history of book numbers", p.109) and Comaromi, John P.: Book numbers: a historical study and practical guide to their use. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited 1981 (gives a detailed account of LC procedure).

Werner Bies

Dr. W. Bies, Universitätsbibliothek der Freien Universität Berlin, Garystr. 39, D-14195 Berlin.

BERNHARDT, Rolf: **Nuñmerungssysteme: Grundbegriffe und Einführung, Systemvergleiche, praktische Anwendung, speziell bei EDV-Systemen** (Numbering systems: Basic concepts and introduction, system comparisons, practical application, especially in computer systems) 2nd rev.ed. Ehningen near Böblingen, DE: Expert Verlag 1990. 220p. ISBN 3-8169-0605-2

The management of products and production processes in enterprises is based to an essential degree on the management of technical information. The introduction of CA