

The first five chapters deal with the theory and practice of Ranganathan's facet formula for the book number, covering in the following order: language of the book, form of presentation of contents in the book, year of publication, accession part of the year number, volume number, supplement number, copy number, criticism number, and accession part of criticism number. Problems with Ranganathan's system are not ignored but are discussed openly, for instance, the problem of placing together the various editions of a book or translations in various languages or abridgements and adaptations of the same book. The appendices provide tables for the language isolate, foci in form and time isolate.

As book numbers are indispensable for any discrete book arrangement on shelves and for giving unique call numbers to library documents anyone with the responsibility of bringing order out of chaos will find this a useful reference.

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DYKSTRA, Mary: **PRECIS: A Primer**. Revised Reprint. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press 1987. IX,270p., ISBN 0-8108-2060-9

Further to the review of the *Primer's* first edition in the previous issue of *International Classification*, a few remarks on the reprint will suffice. Due to the reduced format (close to a "King Penguin") and the handsome pink covers, the book looks different this time. The smaller format is more appropriate, since the type area covered only about 80% per page in the first edition.

What is more important, however, is the fact that the present edition is called a revised reprint. About two and a half sentences are added to the foreword. Yet the arrangement, headings, and length of chapters, sub-sections, and exercises are completely identical with the first edition. No revisions of the index were necessary. As Prof.Dykstra explains, "the text remains essentially the same in this edition" (p.III). Random comparisons of the texts did not show any revisions. The reprint has the same exercises, except for a minor change on p.50. The author's revisions did not include a correction of an error in the contents pages: as in the first edition, it is stated that exercises are to be found on p.80 (instead of p.79).

It seems very sensible, then, that the Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data bluntly describe the book a "reprint".

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CRAVEN, Timothy C.: **String Indexing**. Orlando, Fla.: Academic Press 1986. XI,246p., ISBN 0-12-195460-9

The preparation of alphabetic subject indexes, e.g. for books or bibliographies, is and remains an important topic, albeit one receiving far less attention than the problems involved in the preparation of keyword catalogs. This is due among other things to the fact that, for simplicity's sake, index entries have frequently

remained confined to single words - plus, at best, adjective+noun combinations - subjected to a certain terminology control.

Now, while this may still be an adequate method for preparing subject indexes of books, in the field of indexes for bibliographies it has been found - and this applies equally to keyword catalogs, so that to this extent there is, in the end, no difference between both problems - that one is increasingly confronted with complex document contents creating an inevitable need for precombined index entries, co-extensive with the contents of the given document. This has the effect, however, that one has to work with - co-extensive - multiple entries.

To generate such multiple entries, the wish has meanwhile made itself felt to make use of automated processes. Now here the special challenge presents itself of making only meaningful multiple entries - hence of both excluding certain words from the realm of those used for initiating a search, and of keeping the correct context for the given components of a precombined string intact - or having it generated from an input string. In the book reviewed this task is termed string indexing, an expression covering a broad spectrum of procedures, reaching from such methods as KWIC or KWOC, which have no terminology control or clearly defined syntax in the string at all, to the PRECIS system with its subtly differentiated expression possibilities.

Particular interest has meanwhile been acquired by the problem of having such automatic processes handled with the aid of small computers, as well as by the manifold problems connected with the display of index entries on a screen (e.g. in browsing through inverted lists) in an online retrieval. The book reviewed may be regarded as an important and useful contribution to this subject.

Consisting, on the one hand, of theoretical reflections and, on the other hand, of the description of individual systems, the book is divided into 9 chapters (each concluded by a brief summary), 4 annexes and a detailed bibliography¹).

The book's strength, which at the same time, however - from a reader's point of view - constitutes a certain weakness, lies in the fact that theory and practical application are not treated wholly separate from one another; the author always makes use of concrete examples in his discussion of the various theoretical problems. This approach does not always make it simple for the reader - especially where the less well-known string indexing procedures are discussed - to follow the author's train of thought. The presentation does, however, have the advantage that abstract considerations are always illustrated through comparing several procedures among one another, thus giving the reader a good opportunity to get acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of each procedure.

In the introductory chapter the problem field to be treated is marked out, terminology is introduced and the task, purpose and usefulness of string indexing in the various fields of application are explained. The soundness of the presentation is reflected, among other things, by the use of network diagrams to illustrate the various contextual dependences of the individual components of a string.