# Editorial

### Knowledge Organization and the Humanities and Some Other New Features of this Issue

This issue of our journal will be the first one to carry a number of contributions dealing with classification questions in some areas of the humanities, as well as a further contribution by Brigitte ENDRES-NIGGEMEYER and Bettina SCHMIDT from Hannover Polytechnic, which shows us what an expert system for classification may look like; it contains examples both from an area of the humanities and from one of science. Clare BEGHTOL, Toronto, outlines the problems of access to fiction literature in an elaborate article to be published in two parts, and Michael EISNER, Darmstadt, explains his ARBOR information system which consists of a formal language able to represent textual object knowledge in a computer readable way in the fields of Classical Archaeology and History of Art.

In our scientific development, marked so strongly so far by ratiocination, and in the corresponding expression which this development has found in documentation and classification, there is now a rapidly growing interest in the description of and access to the contents contained in the works of art, be it in literature or in the visual arts or the like. But how are we going to capture into concepts that which usually cannot be explicitly verbalized and must rather be left to intuitive understanding? The challenge presented by the contributions from BEGHTOL and EISNER focuses our interest onto things which are more a part of the interior world than of the exterior one, even though it is by way of the exterior world, namely in the works of the humanities, that this interior world manifests itself. Thus we are now facing the problem of looking out for new possibilities for making the – usually – subjective concepts involved communicable as objective units of knowledge which we can handle. Thus it is not only our intellect which is challenged, but also our imagination and intuition, hence that which is called the "artistic feeling", involving also our thinking with the heart which is capable of making new discoveries all the time, turning as it does in love to that which an artist, often even without knowing it explicitly, intended to express through his work of art. For this reason, too, we are eagerly looking forward to what has been recently referred to as a "superthesaurus": the Getty Foundation's "Art and Architecture Thesaurus" which Pat MOLHOLT mentioned in the discussion at the Paris IFLA Congress after Marcia BATES had outlined her ideas of a "superthesaurus" as a new tool for subject access in her paper (see also the report by Robert HOLLEY on the work of the IFLA Section on Classification and Indexing in this issue).

Thus we would like to invite our readers to ponder these matters, not loosing sight in so doing of what was stressed in the ASIS Bulletin of October/November 1989 on e.g. the significance of classification for the period until the year 2000 by Debora SHAW, the chairperson of a "Think Group" of the American Society for Information Science' socalled "Open Forum for the 1990s":

*"One important approach to handling the myriad, complex information sources will be through classification schemes that are at once more flexible (easily including materials in various formats and from many sources) and more generic (providing summary-level access to primary information). Classification schemes that move beyond "marking and parking" could make it easier for those in need to locate information. Improved means of accessing secondary sources will mean that users can find items of interest without going to the library. Likewise, libraries will find it easier to share resources if a common classification scheme is adopted, allowing resource sharing based on subject as well as known-item requests.*

*Classification has evolved as a practical means of tackling otherwise insurmountable access problems. Retrieval systems have not yet addressed the intellectual questions inherent in locating information, and methods such as full-text searching become less effective as databases grow larger. Novel ideas for information handling have been based on the essentially human and linguistic activity of classifying; for example, Ted Nelson's description of hypertext acknowledges the role of the Dewey Decimal System in his conception. A s y n t h e t i c  c l a s s i f i c a t i o n s c h e m e would greatly improve access to the very large collections of information which will exist in 2000..."* (My emphasis).

Thus we feel challenged to find new ways, which, however, is precisely why the International Society for Knowledge Organization (ISKO) was founded, wishing to bring all those colleagues together who can make efforts in this direction. In this connection your attention is particularly invited to the "ISKO NEWS" section starting in this issue, containing as it does vital information for all ISKO members.

In this issue we also publish for the first time a specialized bibliography of classification systems. Starting out with medical science, we thank Dr.Elisabeth BERGSCHORN, Cologne, for the amount of work done in compiling this list. In this connection we wish to suggest the following three possibilities for further action: (1) stimulate all colleagues interested from the fields of the medical sciences to make this bibliography even more complete, (2) to use the results as a source for comparative and compatibility studies and perhaps also for possible improvements of medical classification and concept systems, and (3) to invite colleagues from other special fields to compile bibliographies of classification systems, thesauri and dictionaries of their fields of knowledge in like manner and publish them for the benefit of their colleagues all over the world in the series started in this issue. Our ICIB 1 volume (the International Classification and Indexing Bibliography, Vol.1, Classification Systems and Thesauri) of 1982 and other such bibliographies might also be helpful to furnish a more complete overview of existing ordering systems.

This issue does not contain INFOTERM News nor COCTA News. We would like to ask our readers whether we should continue publishing these news items?

Finally I would like to mention that – as of Volume 17 (1990) IC will appear four times a year, namely at the end of every quarter. Issue 4 of each volume will then annually include an index for the volume. Having published – cumulated – indexes only every three years so far and the latest one of these indexes having appeared in 1988, we will start publishing our first annual index therefore already this very year in this issue.

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