tion mainly through regular monthly meetings plus annual conferences. The latter activitiy has grown from an initial one-day affair staged in Birmingham to the Informatics series.

It had also become clear that the Group could not exist on a diet of descriptive papers, but would have to explore the fundamental aspects of indexing without hinderance from any supposed limits to co-ordinate indexing. Non bibliographical uses for feature cards and the relationship of coordinate indexing to other classificatory techniques have frequently been discussed.

In the early stages it seemed desirable to produce a thesaurus on co-ordinate indexing, but development has not progressed beyond a long series of draft glossaries due to endless terminological battles. Nevertheless, much has been learned and this activity has encouraged the theory that indexing is essentially a linguistic activity.

The group was intensely critical of the ISO draft specification for the construction of mono-lingual thesauri, particularly of its terminology, its structure (or lack of it), poor examples and the admixture of recommendations with ordinances. In consequence the group has become involved in drafting a British Standard on the same topic. At a more mundane level the design of feature cards and their ancillary drills or punches have been critically appraised, and an 'organization and methods' study was made into the costs of operating manual systems.

R. A. Fairthorne has been a member of the Group's Committee since its inception. He has been a perfect guru in that he has gently led and never pushed. Moreover many meetings have been enlivened by his comments. Leo Jolley has also contributed much, particularly in broadening the Group's horizons towards non-library systems (hospital and personnel records, for instance) and towards general systems theory. As yet moves towards computing have only been made with caution as two other Aslib groups operate in this area.

Kevin P. Jones

The Intermediate Lexicon for Information Science

An Intermediate Lexicon is a device which will facilitate the exchange of index entries to documentary material between information centres with a common interest. The Intermediate Lexicon acts as a switching mechanism to translate the indexing decisions made using one indexing language, via the Intermediate Lexicon, into equivalent decisions in other indexing languages covering the same, or largely overlapping subject area.

In essence, the Intermediate Lexicon incorporates all the indexing concepts present in each of these indexing languages for which it is required to switch indexing entries.

Research has been in progress[1] at the Polytechnic of North London School of Librarianship since August 1971 with a grant from the British Library Research and Development Department on evaluating the feasibility of an Intermediate Lexicon for Information Science. Work has been directed towards (a) assessing the effect of switching between indexing languages with different structures, levels of specificity, and vocabulary size, for which a report is now available; (b) relative retrieval performance of indexes compiled from switched indexing as compared with direct indexing, and (c) a pilot study in several information centres using the Intermediate Lexicon for the exchange of index entries in order to assess the benefits of cooperation for each centre.

Verina Horsnell

1 See also: Horsnell, V.: Intermediate Lexicon for Information Science. A feasibility study. London: Polytechnic of North London, School of Librarianship 1974. 110 p. (reviewed in this issue by W. v. Mach)

"Horizons of Classification" at ASIS Conference

The Special Interest Group on Classification Research (SIG/CR) of the American Society for Information Science (ASIS) had been concerned for some time with the definition of classification. From an investigation into the activities of members of classification societies some more clarity was hoped to be gained. Speakers from three different areas therefore were asked to outline the activities of their particular application areas at the SIG/CR Meeting during the ASIS Conference in Atlanta, Oct. 13–18, 1974. These were: L. A. Neidell with "The DATA CLASSIFIER as seen in the membership and activities of the Classification Society", E. Blume: "The INFORMATION CLASSIFIER as seen in the maintenance of the Library of Congress Classification Schedules", and J. Harris: "The USER of classification systems as seen in the membership of the SIG/Classification Research". In the subsequent discussion the question could not be resolved whether SIG/CR should be renamed since most of its members were not concerned with classification *reserarch* but with its application, with classing and indexing. The papers will not be published, the session was recorded on audiotape and can be ordered from Convention Seminar Cassettes, 13356 Sherman Way, North Hollywood, Calif. 91605, USA.

I. D.

NEWS – NACHRICHTEN

ISI-Lectures on Automatic Classification

Two representatives of the Institute for Scientific Information, Philadelphia, Pa., *Dr. Morton V. Malin* and *Mr. A. E. Cawkell* lectured in Köln/FRG on Nov. 13, 1974 on possibilities for an automatic classification of document contents by using the clusters (and their authors) which have been identified through co-citation frequencies within the ISI citation indexing system. The lectures took place at the Training Centre for Librarians (Bibliothekar-Lehrinstitut des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen) at the University of Köln, the chairman of the discussion session was *Prof. Dr. Günther Pflug*, Direktor of the Interuniversity Library Center, Köln.

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New Classification Research Group in Brasil

At the 2nd National Meeting of professors and experts in classification, Dec. 9–11, 1974, organized in Salvador by the Brazilian Association of Schools of Library Science and Documentation – ABEBD – the Brazilian Classification Research Group (Grupo Brasileiro de Pesquisa em Classificaçao – GPC/Br) was founded. At this same meeting a number of lectures on classification were held and a minimum curriculum on Classification for the Brazilian Schools of Library Science and Documentation was approved envisaging no less than 180 hours of lectures. (The curriculum will be published in the next issue of Intern. Classificat.)

EXACT and GIDEP Improving International Electronic Component Classification Code

EXACT and GIDEP are two systems for the exchange of test data and experience on electronic components, among users of such components.

EXACT (= Internation *Ex*change of *A*uthenticated Electronic *C*omponent Performance *T*est Data) is the international system with participants in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, ESRO, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

GIDEP (= Government-Industry Data Exchange Program) is a scheme for United States and Canada, mainly military and space oriented.

EXACT and GIDEP are cooperating, thereby covering a great part of the western electronic industry.

For the exchange of information a well-defined code for electronic components is necessary to make possible easy retrieval of the information which is computer processed and circulated on microfilm/microfiche.

EXACT and GIDEP have agreed to use the same code, first set up by GIDEP. The classfication code covers about 700 classes for components such as capacitors, cables, connectors, electron tubes, instruments, microelectronic circuits, resistors etc. The code has nine digits, the first three defining the component class, while the remaining three pairs of digits reflect subclasses. Example of a component classification is 651.40.03.14 which means:

651. Resistors, fixed
.40. Composition
.03.Ceramic
.14. Power rating .25–. 50 watt

The code is directed towards performance parameters rather than physical characteristics such as size and weight.

Due to the fast development in the electronic field the code is updated frequently so that new components are entered in the code.

Although the code is not ideal, it has been found satisfactory during the years, and it is hoped that it can be used as well by other organisations outside EXACT and GIDEP. For details please write to: Torsten Gussing, EXACT Central Office, L. Norregatan 4 A, S–271 00 YSTAD, Sweden.

BOOK REVIEWS BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

VLEDUTS, G. E., STOKOLOVA, N. A.: *About a Method of Constructing Information Languages Having Grammar.* (Translated from the Russian by Joe Lineweaver) Bangalore, India: Doc. Res. & Training Center 1974. 29 p. = FID/CR Report No. 13

This paper was to be presented at the Moscow FID-Conference in 1968 which did not take place. It is published in Russian in "International Forum on Informatics. Vol. II. Moscow: VINITI 1969. p. 263–285" and was held worthwhile to be translated into English and finally published in the FID/CR series.

In their introduction, the authors state the case for incorporating syntactical relations into an IR language. After drawing a distinction between those information languages which lack syntax (e. g. sets of unrelated keywords intended for post-coordinate search), and those which set out to express these relationships explicity (e. g. abstracts and pre-coordinated indexes), they cede a point made by Mikhailov and others, and admit that the effort involved in establishing and recording syntactical relations may not be justified in some circumstances. They suggest that this effort might be unnecessary if the number of items being handled falls below a certain threshold (a minimum of about 30,000 is suggested). I would also suggest that the value of this threshold could be influenced by the subject field being indexed – a point to which reference will be made later in the present review. The studies reported here were carried out almost entirely in certain specific and reasonably exact sciences, e. g. chemistry, biology and geology.

Once this point is established (i. e. that, in certain circumstances, the inclusion of syntax in an IR language is justified), the authors go on to consider some of the uses which could be made of this mechanism. Certain of these are reasonably obvious, e. g. its use in detecting 'semantic equivalences'. Others are rather more doubtful. It is, for example, suggested that relevant documents might be identified more readily and accurately if the syntax used in the IR language is also applied to enquiries during their formulation. This may appear to be reasonable in theory, but is of doubtful value in practice. However close it may come to 'natural' language, the syntax employed in an IR language is always (and necessarily) an artificial device, and as such should not be imposed upon untrained users of the system.

With the ground thus cleared, the authors go on to consider various means for achieving a syntactically-organised data base, starting from the work of Woodger...

> "... who set himself the goal of construction, for a comparatively narrow area of biology, a completely formalized (axiomatic) language, with full use of the apparatus of predicate calculus".

They conclude, quite rightly, that this approach is too difficult, and propose, as an alternative, a system based on phrases constructed from natural language elements

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