BOOK REVIEWS

WELLISCH, Hans H.: *Indexing and Abstracting: An International Bibliography.* Santa Barbara, California – Oxford, England: ABC – Ohio, Inc. 1980. xxi, 308 p., ISBN 0-87436-300-4.

If one wishes to trace the development of ideas in a particular subject field, a comprehensive annotated bibliography on the field concerned is an essential reference tool. This tool which was conspicuous by its absence in the field of indexing and abstracting, except for some smaller, highly selective indexing bibliographies, has been sought to be overcome by Wellisch in his annotated bibliography. It is no doubt a very good attempt to bring under one cover "a century of writing on indexing and abstracting".

The bibliography covers the period 1856–1976, though a few writings before the ninetheenth century as well as few books and articles on indexing and abstracting published between 1977–1979 have been included. It is interesting to note that 90 % of the literature covered belongs to Post-World War II era, and that 75 % of the literature emanated from the beginning of 1960! As should be expected, the English language continues to dominate the scene accounting for 83 % of the literature. Topics included in the bibliography are those pertaining to "the indication of subject content by means of words, terms or phrases, but excludes most of the writings on classification". However, comparisons between verbal indexing systems and classification systems as well as publications dealing with "thesauri in selection to indexing, with terminological questions, and with use of thesauri by indexers" have also been included. It is unfortunate, though, that items dealing with "specific local application of an indexing system without contributing anything substantially new to the state of the art" have been excluded. This because it involves evaluation of documents and thus introduces, on the part of the compiler, the element of subjectivity and/or personal bias into the bibliography. Perhaps, it would be a good policy for compilers of comprehensive bibliographies to desist from the temptation of evaluating and to observe reticence in excluding items, and thus leaving it to the judgement of the users to decide the novelty or otherwise of the contributions.

The bibliography is divided into two major parts – Indexing and Abstracting –, preceded by an introductory section. The introductory section traces briefly the history of indexing and abstracting from the time of Aristotle, emphasising on the contributions of Conrad Gessner and Andrea Crestadoro in the mid-sixteenth and mid-nineteenth century respectively, to the present day – the cut-off date being 1976. Indexing, which forms Part 1, includes seventeen sections covering the entire spectrum of indexing – Generalities which include writings of a fundamental nature on the early period, theory of indexing, and mathematical models; Indexing languages/Index terms: General and linguistic aspects; Indexing systems – Kaiser's systematic indexing, Chain indexing, Coordinate indexing, Relational indexing, String index system and switching languages; Comparison and tests of indexing languages; Citation indexes; Indexing techniques – conventional, punched cards, other mechanical aids, Computer-aided indexing and automatic indexing; Index production – filing, typography and format; Indexing specific formats – books, serials and non-book materials; Indexing of names and specific subjects; User and use studies; Cost and time studies; Indexers – behaviour and consistency; Indexing as a profession; Training of indexers; Indexing around the world; History of indexing; and Humour in indexing. Part 2, Abstracting, includes items of a general and evaluative nature, followed by sections on abstracting techniques – human and automatic –, and lastly Abstracting and indexing services. In each of the sections in both the parts, the entries have been arranged chronologically under each subheading and within each year alphabetically by author. A good feature of the bibliography is the inclusion of items dealing with terminology, standards, bibliographies, etc. under the sub-headings as well as provision of "See also" instructions.

Apart from items selected from formal secondary sources, doctoral theses pertaining to indexing and abstracting – seldom listed in general bibliographic tools – have been included in this comprehensive bibliography, a feature that will be appreciated by many a user.

The bibliography comprises 2383 references – 1996 on indexing and 387 on abstracting – and is provided with author and detailed subject indexes. Perhaps, it would have been useful for indexers of bibliographies if information on the subject index in regard to the rules governing the choice of ideas and index terms, rendering of simple and multiworded terms in the index entries, style of writing – capitalisation, punctuation marks, italization etc. –, as well as procedure followed for indexing and man-hours (if available) spent on indexing, was included in the introductory section.

For a detailed statistical analysis of the bibliography, the reader is referred to an article published in Intern. Classific. 7 (1980) No. 3, p. 135–9 by Hans H. Wellisch, the author of this bibliography.

The reviewed bibliography is an indispensable source of most useful information to those interested in teaching and/or those seeking to explore and research in the field of indexing and abstracting. However, the symbiotic relationship existing between classification and indexing necessitates the user to turn to other sources of information on classification literature as no comprehensive bibliography is available on this to-date. Perhaps, this hurdle will be overcome by the publication of *International Classification and Indexing Bibliography*" (ICIB) in 1982 (for details see the Editorial of Intern. Classif. 7 (1980) No. 1).

The reviewed bibliography is recommended for all academic libraries and library and information science schools the world over, especially in developing countries where the printed media continue to be the mainstay of all academic activity, with the automated information retrieval systems still being a dream of a distant future.

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