

reprints would have multiplied their value and utility had these been printed with some editor's introduction explaining their relevance, limitations and the purpose of reprinting his books without revising them. Even the opportunity has not been availed of to correct the earlier misprints, something mentioned as advanced information in context of those times still remains as such thus confusing the readers. Even the Colon Class Numbers printed on the verso of the title pages are according to old editions. The *Prolegomena* has been mentioned as Volume 1; what the other volume(s) will comprise of is not told. The second edition (1960) of the *Elements* has been reprinted, while in 1962 its 3rd revisions edition was brought out and used widely in India. Ignoring these venial omissions, the Ranganathan scholars will gratefully appreciate the bonanza of his books. Thanks to the Endowment for such a thoughtful initiative which is a part of Ranganathan's birth centenary celebration on a large scale with a variety of programmes throughout the year from August 1991 to August 1992.

M.P.Satija

Dr.M.P.Satija, Guru Nanak Dev University, Department of Library and Information Science, Amritsar-143 005, India

MEISS, Brigitte: **Thesaurus, integriert, online, dynamisch - Neues Arbeiten mit DOMESTIC.** (Thesaurus, integrated, online, dynamic - A new way of working with DOMESTIC). München: KTS Informationssysteme 1989. 103p.

An "integrated thesaurus" as described in this book is installed into the literature documentation program in such a way that one may have interactive access to it at all times without having to leave the program. Even while literature analysis is going on, such a thesaurus may be expanded, reorganized, reduced as well as amended, and after any such operation it is immediately available again in its modified form for continued work. All this is shown by means of examples and with the aid of DOMESTIC, a PC-assisted literature documentation program.

For any subject from the field covered by the documentation concerned the indexer or querier can display the relevant parts of the thesaurus on his or her screen and thus readily make an optimal selection, which is facilitated furthermore by the alphabetic and systematic access provided to the thesaurus. These improvements thus have the effect of increasing indexing and retrieval quality.

They positively affect indexing also insofar as the integrated thesaurus offers improved possibilities of revising the indexing of documents. This is desirable when the framework of interests of the system users has changed or when a special field needs to be indexed more specifically. A further important, but rarely discussed problem can likewise be tackled in this connection: it is often particularly important, and not only in patent documentation, to retrieve the earliest documents on a given subject. However, in such an early developmental stage of a subject, no keyword suitable for thesaurus use has usually been developed yet in the

technical language for the given subject, which of necessity was expressed at the time concerned by paraphrasing, definition-type linguistic constructions.

This precluded its proper indexing at the time concerned. In such cases one may attempt, through full-text searching in the texts stored, to round up the relevant documents by using as search criteria the expressions presumably occurring in the paraphrasings. The texts thus found may then, in a single step, be re-indexed using a suitable new descriptor.

Nor is one obliged, in indexing with the aid of an integrated thesaurus, to use one simple specific word as a descriptor. Other words with identical meaning occurring in linguistic usage may likewise be used after having been admitted to the vocabulary in a suitable function. Machine-internally they will then be converted into the corresponding descriptors. Moreover, an interactively maintained thesaurus - unlike a printed one - is always fully up to date, an advantage of great importance particularly in joint indexing operations, such as are possible when working in a network. It is not in the last place due to these advances that, as the author correctly notes, the thesaurus is currently experiencing a renaissance as a tool of information science and practice.

No major progress does the author expect for the increased employment of integrated thesaurus in commercial online databanks and for improved indexing. Where she does perceive possible advances owing to integrated thesauri is the field of the designing and operation of a *user's own, internal documentation*. (This is not surprising, for in the online data banks the procedure shuns the costs of any careful indexing. The costs for such omissions are then left to the user, who initially, however, usually underestimates these costs as well as the magnitude of the information loss inherent in working without a thesaurus. In a self-managed project, however, *both* types of costs make themselves felt, and one is responsible oneself for the information loss occurring).

Access to the contents of the book is provided by an index, albeit rather a succinct one; however, it is supported by a well-arranged table of contents. The printing is outstandingly clear and foreseeable and free of errors. Some flaws noted are the facts that at many points in the book the distinction between "concept" and "descriptor" is blurred and that among the few existing rival products of DOMESTIC named in the book the possibly most serious competitor, at least in Germany, is not mentioned.

Robert Fugmann

Dr.R. Fugmann, Alte Poststr. 13, D-6270 Idstein

MEINL, Franz: **Sachmerkmale, Schlüssel zur technischen Gestaltung, Beschreibung und Information.** (Subject characteristics. Key to their technical formation, description and information). Ehningen: Expert Verlag 1990. 374p. ISBN 3-8169-0051-8

Although written by a technician mainly for technicians, this book also outlines the incorporation of the "Subject Characteristics Classification System" into the economic process and the technical-organizational functions of a given enterprise. In his former function in