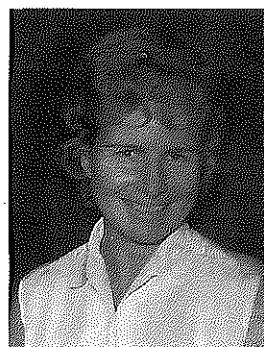# Editorial

Knowledge Organization and You!

When, 17 years ago, we were planning this journal it was our chief concern to create a communication organ for our professional colleagues generally working in isolation. For until only a short while there never were more than only a very few colleagues – librarians, information scientists, commodity systematists, terminologists, philosophers, philologists and others – to give thought to the ordering of knowledge. Today, however, with information systems developing into knowledge-based ones and an understanding being developed for the interrelationships of knowledge in the microknowledge area, hence on the level of concepts and characteristics, knowledge ordering and representation problems are meeting with new, unexpected interest though essentially only from the side of our colleagues from the computer science field. And here, now, we are experiencing in many respects a virtual reinvention of the wheel, with, possibly, many a thing being invented along which can, in turn, enrich our professional field as well. Therefore we must now turn to and go toward the computer scientists, i.e. learn to master their technology so as to be able to discuss with them our – now common - problems!

In selecting the above title for this editorial for issue no.1 of volume 17 of our – now quarterly – journal I did not merely intend it to serve as an appeal along the lines suggested above, but also as one calling quite generally for more activity on the part of those interested in the contents of this journal. In our very first editorial (1974) we said that "(this) journal implements a programme". Next to other programme items we envisioned the incorporation of "(critical) comments, which we ask our reader to kindly provide, on the original articles (appearing in this) journal. These comments themselves may also be subjected in their turn to evaluation..." (Int.Classif.1974;No.1, p.2). However, such comments have been very rare in coming, and in the past few years it has regrettably failed to occur to anyone at all to write a "Letter to the Editor". That is the reason why I consider it in order to quite deliberately provoke you, just for once, by confronting you with the first three articles in this issue, any of which may well evoke critical or appreciative remarks from you. What e.g. do you think of the processes of thought JOHANSEN ("Methods of Subject Structure Display") wishes to invite you to? Next, do you perceive, in the contribution by Hemalata IYER ("Natural Language Representation: Transformational Rules"), a new possibility of syntactically representing knowledge? Third, what do you think of the notation solution for on-line processing ("A Flexible Faceted Notation System") offered by Songquiao LIU on the basis of Brian Buchanan's well-known example of a retroactive notation? Finally, Clare BEGHTOL's contribution on "Access to Fiction", now concluded, should likewise provoke further reflection on the still generally unused possibilities of contents description in fiction and in other non-scientific literature, as it is called.

So that the "discussion partners" may get to know each other more "vividly", (contributions as well as comments "letter-writers please note!) will as of now be enlivened by author's photographs, as we already did in our last issue, if at a somewhat concealed spot, with the two authors B.ENDRES-NIGGEMEYER and Bettina SCHMIDT of the contribution "Knowledge-based classification systems: Basic issues, a toy system and further prospects".

With the founding of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KNOWLEDGE ORGANIZATION (ISKO), our INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION became the house organ of this Society. We therefore asked the members of that Society's Scientific Advisory Council to serve as of 1990 also as IC's Consulting Editors, thus replacing all but a few members of the Board that has been functioning since 1974. This accounts for the changes you may have noted in the list of names in the Journal's imprint.

The new department 'ISKO News' features this time first of all the preliminary program for the forthcoming 1st International Conference "Tools for Knowledge Organization and the Human Interface", which, we hope, you will all feel inspired to attend. The program committee headed by Robert FUGMANN, in endeavoring to give priority to realistic contributions, intends to have the conference start out with a panel discussion on such topics as the postulates advanced by Don SWANSON in his J.ASIS article of 1988.

In this connection, particular attention is also invited to R.FUGMANN's book review in this issue on the AMERICAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS' 13 May 1988 conference, whose proceedings, reviewed here, were published by B.H.Weinberg under the title "Indexing– The State of Our Knowledge and the State of Our Ignorance". I tend to regard it as increasingly important today that our manner of dealing with one another and with our knowledge should be marked by honesty, modesty and recognition of our limitations. Then the wonderful achievements of technology will not induce us to euphorically adulate its possibilities but rather to realistically using it, in gratitude to and awe of Him who granted man the freedom to use his mental faculties in a meaningful – that is: His – way!   Ingetraut Dahlberg