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In Memoriam: Phyllis Richmond

Professor Phyllis Allen **Richmond** passed away on October 6, 1997 after a lengthy illness. Professor Richmond was regarded as one of the most outstanding authorities in classification research in North America. She held a masters degree in library science from Western Reserve University, and a PhD in the history of science and medicine from the University of Pennsylvania. She taught classification and related subjects at Syracuse and Case Western Reserve Universities and published widely in her field, bringing to bear on classification theory her knowledge of medicine. Phyllis Richmond's valuable contribution to her field as a researcher was recognized when she received the Margaret Mann Award from the Resources and Technical Division (later ALCTS) of the American Library Association. As a pioneer in the field of information science in the United States and was awarded the ASIS Award of Merit. Well known on the international scene, Professor Richmond participated in two of the FID/CR Study Conferences on Classification Research. She was and active participant at Elsinore and prepared a paper which was delivered at Bombay. Professor Richmond made important contributions to classification research and will be greatly missed both as a colleague and as a friend.

Universal Decimal Classification

Extensions and Corrections to the UDC, 1997 (E&C) has just been published by the UDC Consortium in The Hague. The 1997 edition contains revisions for Physiographic regions, Germany, Navigation and Botany (taxonomic tables only). There are also proposals for Mathematics and Medicine and a report on Astronomy. Editions of *E&C* may be purchased from the UDC Consortium through the FID Secretariat in The Hague. A revision of Chemistry will appear in 1998 and work is currently being carried out on auxiliaries -03 and -05. It is also expected that a third edition of the International Medium Edition, English Text will be published in the near future.

Classification Research Group (CRG)

The 310th Meeting of the Classification Research Group took place on Friday, July 11 at University College London. The principal business of this meeting was a report and discussion of the 6th International Study Conference on Classification Research "Knowledge Organization for Information Retrieval". A number of CRG members had attended the conference and 8 new members had joined CRG during the Conference.

Douglas **Foskett** led a discussion reviewing some of the issues raised at the conference. He set the tone of the discussion first by discussing briefly the opening of the conference by Professor Ia **McIlwaine**, Conference Chair, and then reported on the keynote address given by Jack **Mills**. Mills had stressed four main points: 1. "It should not be forgotten how much Dorking was a real water shed in the introduction of Ranganathan's ideas and in the post-coordinate approach"; 2. "The CRG's articulation of these ideas was notable in the early 1960s when it initiated its own research, funded by NATO, into the problems associated with the provision of a new general classification scheme based on faceted principles The results from this were published as an LA [Library Association] pamphlet"; 3. "Since the 1970s the major revision of the Bliss scheme, now nearing completion, has drawn heavily on the ideas of Dorking, in particular the use of faceted principles throughout BC2." 4. "Mr. Mills also reminded the Conference of the importance of classification for subject display: the classed array of the shelves was an order and should still be a central concern of classification."

Foskett then recalled the years of discussion in the search for a new general classification scheme and particularly the relationship between general and special schemes which remained unresolved in the NATO research. He argued that a distinction needs to be made between a universal scheme and a general scheme. In a universal scheme there is the notion of the whole and of an integration covering the whole of knowledge. He felt that principle of integrative levels should be used to accomplish this. On the other hand he viewed a general scheme as only a collection of

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special schemes, that is an aggregate which would not necessarily have any overall coherence.

From here Foskett moved on to discuss a paper on "Definitional approaches in the design of the terms used in classification and thesauri and their implications for retrieval and for automatic classification" given by Elaine **Svenonius**. She had stressed the importance of accurate definitions to improve the precision of terms particularly where hierarchical relationships are involved. Svenonius distinguished two different kinds of hierarchies - those that involve logical relationships and those which are based on difference perspective viewpoints. The general discussion of this point focused on whether or not some terms are always true and whether there can be unique definitions. Foskett felt that there could be unique definition and that the solution to locating such definitions is in an "integrative-level hierarchical system ".

Following from this a lively interchange took place on the definition of several terms used within classification itself, specifically pre-coordinate, post-coordinate and facet. Eric **Coates** reminded the meeting that classification itself is a definition system and suggested that it is only cross classification that needs defining. In further discussion Dr. **Edkins** referred to a paper by Clare **Beghtol** on "What is an event? Domain analysis of narrative documents" in which her research focused on the understanding of narrative by the classifier and the user. In this context Edkins further referred to Francis **Miksa's** paper which considered "The influence of mathematics on Ranganathan's classification theory".

Ultimately, the discussion turned to the internet. Foskett observed that Nancy **Williamson's** paper on "Knowledge organization and the Internet" had reported on the very superficial use of classification in this system. Most of those present felt that the internet is out of control. However, Mrs. Dextre **Clarke** pointed to the view of Francis Miksa that we should take a different view of the internet by comparing it to conventional publishing and concentrating on the needs of particular user groups. It was announced that the next meeting would be held on Friday November 7, 1997 and the agenda would focus on "The relationship between technology and the disciplines."

ASIS Annual Meeting

The 1997 Annual Meeting of ASIS was held in Washington DC, November 1-6.

Once again ASIS SIG/CR held a one day Workshop and also participated in several programmes in the main meeting.

Seven papers were presented in the 8th ASIS SIG/CR Classification Research Workshop. These papers were on a variety of topics related to classification.

Preliminary proceedings were available at the workshop and the papers will be published in final form later.

A paper on "Classification Systems as boundary objects in diverse information ecologies" by Hanne **Albrechtsen** and Elin **Jacob** presented research on the "notion of the classification scheme as a transitional element or 'boundary object'. The authors offer an alternative approach to the traditional classification system. In doing so their work attempts to address the problem of a static framework and to recognize the underlying relationship between user access and collective knowledge structures. They see the role of classification as facilitation of communication, maintenance of coherence and the establishment of shared conceptual context. Tom **Curran** and Paul **Thompson** considered "Automatic Categorization of Statute Documents". The paper focused primarily on the methodology and the system used a set of descriptors from statute documents to provide a lexicon of term.

In a paper on "Knowledge Class - a dynamic structure for subject access on the web", Xia **Lin** and Lois Mai **Chan**" described an investigation of how traditional information organizing concepts, methods and tools could be applied in the digital environment both theoretically and practically. The method called "Knowledge Class" is designed to be used for organization and access. It is seen as being primarily designed for use on the web as an interface between web technology and traditional devices of knowledge organization and access. The organizing framework is a classified mini-thesaurus containing hierarchically structured collections of terms. The structures are dynamic in nature and emphasize the intellectual construction of word/term relationships The system makes web information access transparent to the user and provides relatively stable information space. while maintaining dynamic links to adapt to a changing digital environment. A demonstration of Knowledge Class may be found on the world wide web at http//lislin.gws.uky.edu/kc/index.html. Marianne Lykke **Nielsen** described "The word association in the methodology of thesaurus construction."

In contrast to the traditional thesaurus, the thesaurus developed here is a searching thesaurus which does not standardize terms, but instead provides alternatives (e.g., synonyms, quasi-synonyms, antonyms etc) to the terms the searcher has used in a query. Thus the user is presented with different ways of looking for his/her subjects and stimulates further consideration of the subject. The main purposes to increase the user's view of the subject and to elaborate and clarify search strategy. Thus it aids searchers in four ways, to gain access to a subject, to help in the understanding of the subject, to aid the user in understanding her/his needs and to act as a tool in query expansion in an interactive environ-