
Editorial

Do You Know Your Literature?

The literature in our special field of classification and indexing has grown to such an extent that hardly anybody could purport to know all about it, much less to know it. Yet we must keep up-to-date and we must teach on the basis of knowledge from research and development available in our field – which, of course, was once recorded by somebody. It was already mentioned in the Editorial of the last number of IC that volume II of our INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION AND INDEXING BIBLIOGRAPHY (ICIB) with the Reference Works and Conferences of the last 32 years (1950–1982) (some 4000 titles) was published in the summer of 1984. An article on this volume will appear in the next issue together with the classification system (called Classification Literature Classification) used to display the titles of the conference papers in the index systematically.

What is to happen with the literature after 1982 and with that which we left out because we were not aware of its existence? The newer literature is, of course, constantly included in our current bibliography, but only in a rather “undigested form” as we do not have the time and the space to evaluate it critically. This is, however, an urgent necessity. How are we to cope with it?

The FID Study Committee on Classification Research has published a series of reports devoted to the development of classification and indexing in several countries, such as India, Australia, the Argentine, and Canada. These reports are available – except for the one on Canada – from the Documentation Research and Training Centre in Bangalore, India. The one on Canada, compiled in 1981 by Prof. T. CRAVEN, is available through the INDEKS Verlag. Last year a promise was received from Czechoslovakia to report on the classification and indexing development in that country and we are happy to be able to include in this issue the contribution by Dr. Pavla Stančíková on the Indexing languages in use in Czechoslovakia. As she had been the co-ordinator of a series of Conferences on Indexing languages in the CSSR in recent years, she was able to give a lucid analysis of its contributions in this report.

What Ms. Stančíková had done for her country – and was done more elaborately by Mr. Craven in the FID/CR Report No. 19 (“Research in Document Classification and Indexing (Canada) 1971–1980”) – could become an example for all the other countries.

It was stated during the recent FID/CR Business Meeting (Sept. 20, 1984, The Hague – see also the report in the FID/CR News of this issue –) that such national reports would be very welcome from the USSR and from Germany. Of course, we would also need them from England, France, Poland, Hungary and any other country as well as updatings from countries like India and others on which reports are already available.

So far, the reports have been so voluminous that their publication in a separate report form was justified. We were able to publish the last report from the CSSR in this journal – which seems to be a more effective distribution channel, as this journal is circulated in many more copies than the total edition of the FID/CR Report Series.

We would therefore like to call upon the chairpersons of classification and indexing groups in each country to consider, in their groups, the possible production of such classification and indexing research development reports for subsequent publication either in IC or in a separate form. With such activities each country would open up its knowledge in our field for the benefit of colleagues in other countries.

I am convinced that by thus trying to share our knowledge with others systematically on a national basis, we will grow in insight and in understanding. Whoever got involved in analyzing the national literature in our field and in compiling a summary of it, would be surprised, on considering what has been going on in the last 5–10 years.

With the availability of such reports, our community in the world of information will be able to compare and orient itself as well as to help in making otherwise less known authors and their work accessible to others.

For these reasons, I would like to publish in each issue of IC from now on a report from at least one country and would appreciate any such contributions. The teachers in classification and indexing should, however, not consider this an assignment for their students (except perhaps for the collection of the material), since such reports need indeed to be composed by someone with an excellent knowledge in our field, like a teacher himself.

I am turning therefore especially to our good teachers who would definitely profit most of all from such work if they would take it upon themselves, either alone or in collaboration with others, to compose such a “country report”!

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