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1989 has been a very busy year internationally in classification theory and practice. Among the activities were: Conference in Edmonton, Canada, a seminar on the Dewey Classification, Edition 20, during IFLA in Paris, France; programmes on various aspects of classification research and practice, as well as thesaurus construction, at ASIS in Washington; the founding of a new international classification society in Frankfurt, West Germany.

Congratulations to Ingetraut DAHLBERG and the Officers of the International Society for Knowledge Organization (ISKO). Best wishes for ISKO's future!

## **The 5th International Study Conference for Classification Research**

The date of this conference has been moved back to June 1991. This change will allow more time for careful planning and will make it possible to place it in a more favourable position with reference to the two classification conferences held in North America in 1988 and 1989, as well as the ASIS Annual Conference to be held in Toronto, Canada in November 1990. The exact dates and location for the Study Conference are currently in the planning stage and a call for papers will be issued early in 1990.

## **FID 45th Conference and Congress, Havana, Cuba**

A change of dates has been announced for this conference. It will now be held Sept. 17-22, 1990. FID/CR is planning a combined business and programme meeting for the Cuban Conference. The agenda is expected to include a presentation on UDC, its present status and future directions; a review of classification research and progress since the 4th International Study Conference in Augsburg (in preparation for the Toronto Conference); as well as a review and update on FID/CR activities generally.

## **FID/CR Future Directions**

As part of the assessment of FID/CR activities and projects, the Chair travelled to The Hague in May 1989 to meet with Ben GOEDEGEBUURE, FID Executive Director, and with members of the Management Board for UDC. Very fruitful discussions took place and important lines of communication were established. All past and proposed activities of FID/CR were examined and plans for future projects will be presented to the FID/CR membership over the next few months. Among the more important results of these meetings were the establishment of formal liaison with the IFLA Standing Committees on Classification and Indexing, and Cataloguing, and with INFOTERM as well. The FID/CR chair was appointed to serve on the Task Force on UDC System Development.

## **Task Force on UDC System Development**

In October 1988, the UDC Management Board established the Task Force on UDC System Development, with the charge "to advise the UDC Management Board - in the form of a written report - concerning appropriate long term, strategic development of the Universal Decimal Classification as in its entirety an effective, flexible and durable system for use in classifying recorded information and knowledge". The Task Force was constituted early in 1989 with Dr. I. McILWAINE, School of Library Archive and Information Studies, University College London as Chairperson. The Task Force is now well into its deliberations, having met during IFLA in Paris in August and again in The Hague in October. A third meeting is planned for Amsterdam at the beginning of February 1990. There is need to be seriously concerned about the future of UDC and therefore it is important to act quickly. The Task Force is addressing all aspects of UDC and its problems including the needs of its users. Recommendations for the strategic development of UDC will be set down in a report to be presented to the Management Board in the early spring of 1990.

## **International Conference on Library Classification and its Functions, Edmonton, Canada, June 20-21, 1989**

Organized by the Faculty of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, this conference focussed on the general nature of library classification in its three functions - bibliothecal, bibliographic, and cognitive. Eight papers were presented by authorities in the field and the overall approach of the conference was to move from the simple to the complex. Professor André NITECKI, University of Alberta presented the opening paper "The functions of classification" establishing the framework for the remainder of the Conference. Nitecki placed his remarks in the context of the changing role of classification, in the light of internationalization and the differing traditions in the function of classification in North America and Europe and other parts of the world. In conclusion, he stated that at least two kinds of classification are necessary for present and future needs, one for storage and retrieval of physical objects and the second for the bibliographic and retrieval function.

Tony FELL, Grant McEwan Community College, addressed the bibliothecal function, identifying and examining in detail the major factors governing efficiency and effectiveness. Fell concluded that "users will continue to demand shelf browsing and comparison of related items to fulfil the desire for contact with actual library materials". Professor Elaine SVENONIUS, University of California at Los Angeles, presented an analysis of the "Bibliographic Function of Classification". Setting her remarks in the historical context of the differing North American and European traditions, Svenonius assessed Cutter's approach and its effect on North American practice, as well as considering classification in the context of the classified catalogue. Svenonius sees online systems as having important potential for improved knowledge representation with a richer structure. She further speculates that an "ideal" classification could provide a useful

means of evaluating and developing existing classification systems, but views a wholly new classification for the online environment as "a luxury not to be dreamed of". Such speculation raises the question as to how bibliothecal classification might best be adapted to a bibliographical function online. Two aspects of the question were explored - the objections raised to the online implementation of traditional classification and some strategies for using bibliothecal classification online. From her analysis Svenonius proposed the use of "a kind of text fragment" to serve as an intermediary between the users input query and a set of classification numbers". In essence she was suggesting chain index entry as the intermediary. Experimental work would be needed and the goal should be: improved precision without destroying recall. Svenonius also called for new methods of display, perhaps in the form of tree structures. In conclusion she refutes Cutter's objections to the classified catalogue.

Continuing the examination of the function of classification in the international context, Professor Mary DYKSTRA, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada examined "Canada's role in bridging the North American/European approach to classification". With particular reference to Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, Dykstra analyzed the position of both library practice and library education. She found that both public and academic libraries are tied almost entirely to the American tradition, and deviation from that tradition occurs most often in special libraries and special information agencies. At the same time a survey of the seven Canadian library and information science degree programmes suggested that while Canadian library and information science education might not be a strong bridge between the two traditions, it is more international in its approach than is the American practice. In Canada there is an openness to the international perspective and a critical awareness of the methods and practices beyond national borders.

As a conclusion to the first day of the conference, a paper by John COMAROMI, Editor, Dewey Decimal Classification provided a "Comparison of Major Classification Schemes" including the BBK, Bliss's Bibliographic Classification, the Colon Classification, UDC, DDC and LCC. Factors considered were the "operational considerations", that is the administrative, machine capability, the indexing and notational and instructional requirements, including the strength and weakness of each system. Finally, Comaromi's paper examined each system in the context of the three functions, concluding that BBK, Bliss and Colon are superior in the cognitive sense, BBK and UDC function best bibliographically, while LCC is bibliothecally superior. Ending on a practical note Comaromi stated that he felt switching classification schemes is administratively foolish. Unlike NITECKI he felt any classification could serve both cognitive and bibliographic functions.

The second day of the conference emphasized the cognitive function of classification systems. Professor Timothy CRAVEN, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada presented a paper on "The cognitive function of classification: the role of library classification in thesaurus construction". His discussion included an analysis of the similarities and differences between classification schemes and thesauri, classification schemes as part of thesauri, the use of classification in thesaurus construction and the use of thesauri in classification scheme instruction. The concepts of faceting and citation order are deemed to be fundamental to both thesauri and classification. Craven admitted he was not proposing any new departure but he perceived a variety of roles for classification in online systems. The second major paper related to the cognitive functions centred on automatic classification and document clustering. A paper by Professor Gerard SALTON, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, focussed "On the use of cluster file organization in information search and retrieval". Salton sees conventional files as providing fast response to a query with acceptable output, but their major drawback is that they preclude the kind of collection browsing readily available in conventional libraries. Salton perceives browsing as a desirable feature of any information retrieval system. One approach to this in the computerized system is "clustered document collections". He cited two basic problems for operational systems of this nature - the cost of the automatic document clustering of large files and the uncertainty of the effectiveness and efficiency of searches in document clustered files. In his final summary Salton concluded that clustered file organizations are useful for medium-sized collections and using tight cluster, search effectiveness could be somewhat superior to that obtained from inverted files, although response time in clustered files could be somewhat slower. More experimentation is needed to determine whether clustered file organizations are viable for collections of 100,000 documents or more. In the final paper of the day, Professor C.R. WILSON, Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, discussed the "Exportability/Transfer of classification" from the point of view of a social scientist. Wilson felt that there are major problems to overcome. Technological transfer is not simple, there are often cultural blind spots and the "best" system is not necessarily transferable.

Professor Nancy WILLIAMSON's task was to provide an evaluation and conclusion for the conference. In summarizing the results, she noted that participants felt that classification still has a vital function to play in storage and retrieval systems. Participants felt that new classification schemes designed specifically for use in online systems are unlikely to be developed in the near future, but online systems themselves have greater potential for better use of existing classification systems.

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