FID/CR News 34

Dewey Decimal Classification

Congratulations to Joan MITCHELL, who has been appointed Editor of the Dewey Decimal Classification. Ms. MITCHELL has, until recently, been the Head of Academic Computing and Industrial Technology at Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA and she has been the most recent Chairperson of the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee. She is an active member of the American Library Association, has served on numerous ALA committees and has been Chairperson of the Cataloging and Classification Section (CCS) and the CCS Subject Analysis Committee of ALA's Association for Library Collections and Technical Services.

UDC Administrative Activities

Two important events have taken place in the recent past relating to the UDC. The first is the resignation of David STRACHAN as Technical Director of the UDC after many years of work on editing the UDC, and the appointment of his replacement Frits OOMES, who took over in October 1992. The second is the completion of the Master Reference File (MRF) in March 1993. This is a machine-readable database of the classification which will in future be the authoritative version of the UDC. It is the property of the UDC Consortium and the work has been carried out successively by David STRACHAN and Frits OOMES.

Now, for the first time, the classification is in a manageable format that can be used for a variety of purposes and may be exploited by the members of the UDC Consortium or by others under licence. It will also be the basis for future revision and, where appropriate, expansion.

Taking the English text of the International Medium Edition as a starting point, the entire classification has been examined, distilled and reduced to a reasonably balanced level of enumeration. No major revisions have been made beyond those authorized through the annual publication *Extensions and Corrections to the UDC*. This means that a selection of all revisions from *Extensions and Corrections 10:1 to 14:3* has been included. Editions of the classification published more recently than BS 100M have also been used to assist in the selection of terms and editorial work on filling in hierarchies and some updating of terminology has been carried out. The database has been created on CDS/MicroISIS using a conversion program written at the University of Amsterdam.

The database, which is at present in English, may be translated and published by publishers who are either members of the UDC Consortium or who have been licensed by the Consortium to publish. Applications may be made to publish in any form, e.g. CD-ROM, magnetic tape or hard copy and to develop such retrieval aids as the hypertext version pioneered by the Spanish publishers. Similarly, applications may be made to subscribe to the database for use in an individual system, and for an updating service. It is conceivable, if there is seen to be a demand, that in due course the database may be extended to 'full' level. This might not be a comprehensive expansion, but simply individual sections according to need, depending totally on user demand. It is more likely that it will first be extended to a second language, possibly German.

The whole database is at present undergoing a quality assessment by the Revision Advisory Group. This small panel of experts has been set up by the Executive Committee to act as an editorial board responsible for maintaining the standard of the UDC and for giving guidelines for its revision. Its task is to ensure that the quality of the classification is maintained through the use of appropriate expertise, to handle technical matters and to take the initiative in the future development of the scheme.

The Executive Committee anticipates that at least 5% of the classification will be revised annually. The intention is that this should be done through commissioning individuals or institutions to develop or redraft sections of the scheme in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Revision of the UDC* drawn up by the Revision Advisory Group. The Group is anxious to compile a directory of experts who are interested in either participating in revision work or in the quality assessment of revision work undertaken by others. Anyone who is interested in participating in this way should write to the UDC Technical Director at FID Headquarters.

Another way in which the Executive Committee hopes to create a wider interest and participation in the scheme is through the setting up of user clubs. Plans are already well advanced for the establishment of these in several countries and it is hoped that there will be a significant increase in interest now that the Master Reference File is complete and available. They may be established on either a national or a subject basis.

Users will be anxious to know what the intentions are with relation to an amendment service. In addition to making the machine readable version, together with an updating service, available on a subscription basis, the intention is to continue the publication of *Extensions and Corrections to the UDC*. This may appear in a somewhat different form from its predecessor and will include news of the scheme, notes on projected revisions, comments from users, an annually updated current list of nation states and the text of revised or corrected sections of the classification. The first issue in this new form will be published later in 1993.

It looks as though the UDC is now in a stronger position to meet the twenty first century and to maintain its standing as one of the most widely used systems for information retrieval. The publication of a guide for users is planned for later this year, a new Medium edition in English is announced for 1993 and at last the demand for a machine readable product with an updating service can be met.

I.C.McIlwaine

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Restructuring UDC: A Feasibility Study

Work has begun in Toronto, Canada on a research project to carry out "A Feasibility Study for Restructuring the UDC". The Principal Investigators are I.C. McILWAINE (United Kingdom) and Nancy WILLIAMSON (Canada). The study will explore the possibility of restructuring the UDC into a faceted classification systems using the facet structure from the second edition of the *Bliss Bibliographic Classification.* In the first stage of the research the objective is to determine the purpose and use of a restructured scheme, to identify problems involved in this kind of restructuring and to work out a possible methodology for further restructuring of the entire scheme. The UDC 61 (Medicine) and 7 (The Arts, etc.) are being used in this study. Research grants are being sought to support the work and recommendations from the study will be submitted to the UDC Consortium for consideration and policy decisions on the future development of the UDC.

ASIS SIG/CR

The Third Annual ASIS SIG/CR Classification Research Workshop was held on October 25, 1992 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This day-long workshop was held immediately prior to the regular sessions of the 55th ASIS Annual Meeting. The success of this third Classification Research Workshop appears to have confirmed the Workshop as an important permanent feature of ASIS pre-conference events. The fourth Workshop will be held October 24, 1993 at the 56th ASIS Annual Meeting in Columbus, Ohio. The third Workshop was convened by Co-Chairs Raya FIDEL, Phil SMITH and Barbara KWASNIK. The overall purpose of the Workshop was to facilitate the exchange of ideas among researchers active in the creation, development, management, representation, display, comparison, compatibility, theory and application of classification schemes. As has been the custom, participants in the Workshop caue from a wide variety of background disciplines and were brought together by their special expertise and interest in classification systems. Emphasis was on the semantic elements of classification schemes, not on the statistical bases of the systems, and the diversity of approaches added vigorous debate to the Workshop. Initial versions of the Workshop papers were distributed beforehand to enable participants to familiarize themselves with the topics to be presented, and the revised Proceedings will be published as an ASIS monograph entitled *Advances in Classification Research* by Learned Information, Inc., in 1993.

During the day, thirteen papers were presented on a variety of topics. Among them were: an examination of the role of classification structures in helping create classification theory: the use of a machine-readable dictionary for the automatic classification of documents; the use of vocabulary sets derived from *Library of Congress Subject Headings* to search a music database; an associative network for machine-aided classification and subsequent searching; a review of approaches taken in deciding the extent of compatibility of indexing languages online; examination of the role of contextual hierarchies in classification schemes; examinations of the role of classification in the visualization of spatial clusters; the provision of automatic mechanisms to enable searchers to broaden or narrow searches at will; the development of a query answering system that tries to give an approximate answer when an exact answer is not available; the organization of slots in large, frame structured knowledge bases using a two-tiered approach; the development of an online browser for the *Dewey Decimal Classification.*

Some important issues were raised by these papers, particularly in the light of technological advances and their various application to classification systems. As the Co-Chairs pointed out in their Preface to the *Proceedings* (p. iii), we need a theory of the organization of knowledge that is specifically designed for effective searching in large databases with different structures and different content. This theory needs both to support the development of techniques and tools for indexers and to facilitate automatic processing by computer. In addition, we need interfaces that use visualization and abstraction techniques to help users explore large, possibly unfamiliar, knowledge structures. Undoubtedly, technological change will continue to challenge us to re-think the relationship of classification systems to all aspects of information storage and retrieval. The papers given at the third Classification Workshop illustrate the variety of vigorous and stimulating research we can anticipate as the process of inventive re-discovery and resourceful new development of classificatory techniques and systems continues.

Clare Beghtol

U.K.: CRG 291

The minutes of the 291st Meeting, having taken place on April 29, 1993 were received already on May 18, 1993. The seven members present continued the discussions on the *Bliss Bibliographic Classification, Class V - Fine Arts.* Mr. NEILSON raised several questions relating e.g. to industrial art: kinetic art sculpture; art produced by computer programs; minimalist art. Mr. COATES suggested to consider the definition of what is art; in his opinion the motive behind the production was the important element. Regarding the expression of components of artefacts by the notation he suggested that instructions should be given to the classifier to borrow from elsewhere in the system. Mr. FOSKETT pointed out that such a procedure had also been necessary in Class J, however, by by this the citation order had to be changed. A universally consistent citation order does not seem to be possible.

Furthermore problems of textile design, tapestry, painting on Greek vases were discussed a.o.. The work of T. Munro: *The arts and their interrelations,* 2nd ed. 1969 was mentioned as well as the triple division of Kant.

At the forthcoming meeting on July 8, 1993, the Performing Arts in BC2 will be discussed.

FID/CR Chair: Prof. Nancy Williamson, Faculty of Library and Information Science, 140 St. George Street, Toronto M5S 1A1, Canada.

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