Newsletter
Section on Classification and Indexing
Division of Bibliographic Control
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

Nr 23   **June 2001**

In this issue:
- About the section
- Program for Boston with abstracts of the papers
- Program for the Satelitte Conference, Subject Retrieval in a Networked Environment
- A presentation of the MACS project for the satellite conference by Max Naudi and Elisabeth Freyre
- A report from the Working Group for Multilingual Information Languages by Gerhard Riesthuis

In the last issue I mentioned that Lois Mai Chan was coming to Sweden to give lectures about Library of Congress Subject Headings. It was a very successful week with nearly 170 participants from libraries all over Sweden, and the admiration for Lois was indeed very great. For many it was quite an overwhelming experience getting to know this system and the red book as they had very little if any training when it comes to subject headings. We are now dreaming of making a Swedish adaption that is easy to apply without loosing the qualities of LCSH! This autumn we will have a follow up of these lectures.

Pia Leth

To all members of the Section

Greetings to all members of the committee and welcome to our newcomers. The Section has a full programme for Boston. We are not only organizing a Satellite Conference, at which I hope we shall see most if not all of you. The preliminary programme is given later in this newsletter and full details about registration can be found at:

http://www.oclc.org/events/ifla/

We have four papers for the open meeting. As usual, we shall also participate in the Open Forum of the Division of Bibliographic Control. As last year, this will take the form of a series of short presentations. Each Section will make a report highlighting activities in the Section and progress with projects. There will also be reports on FRANAR and from UBCIM. We also plan a social gathering for all members of the Division, including both outgoing and incoming committee members, on the Monday at 1.00 immediately after the Division Open Forum. This will be in the Division's Room.

The Chair, Secretary/Treasurer and Standing Committee members wish to express their appreciation of your support for the furthering of subject access to information in all its forms. In addition, I would like to say a personal thank you to outgoing members of the Committee, **Jon Anjer** (Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science, Oslo College, Oslo, Norway), **Michel Fournier** (Université Laval, Québec, Canada), **Friedrich Geisselmann** (Universitätsbibliothek Regensburg, Germany), **Magda Heiner-Freiling** (Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **Elisabet Lindkvist Michailaki** (The Swedish Parliament, Stockholm, Sweden), **Gerhard Riesthuis** (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands), **Irina Tsvetkova** (National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, Russia). We shall miss them all and are extremely grateful to them, and especially to those who have served us so well in chairing working groups, representing the Section on other groups and in assisting with the translations of papers for the conference. This last task is one that I shall be

approaching some of our new members to assist with, as well as once again asking those who so nobly undertake the task each year. I would like to welcome the new members to our committee. They are **Martin Kunz** (Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **Marie Balikova** (National Library of the Czech Republic, Prague), **Vanda Broughton** (University College London, UK), **Leda Bultrini** (Universitá Roma 3, Italy), **Björn Dahla** (Donner Institute, Åbo, Finland), **Ekaterina Zaitseva** (Mosow, Russia) and **Maria Witt** (Médiathèque de la Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, Paris, France).

You will recall that this is an election year. Both Edward Swanson and I have served four years in our respective offices in the Section and have therefore reached the end of our terms of office. We both have a further two years on the Committee and are therefore eligible to stand for different offices if invited to do so. Those eligible to nominate and to vote for officers are those members who are already on the committee and have a further two (or four) years to serve – in other words, not outgoing members nor those newly elected for the first time. I would be grateful if you would send me nominations for officers not later than **August 1st.** I shall be leaving shortly after that date for the Satellite Conference and need to have the paperwork prepared before I set out.

Ia McIlwaine
Chair
IFLA Section on Classification and Indexing

Standing Committee and Open Programme meetings for the Boston Conference

These times are provisional. Please check IFLANET and your programme for more up to date information.

Saturday, August 18th, 8.30-11.20 am Standing Committee I
Monday, August 20th, 11.30 am-1.00 pm Division of Bibliographic Control Open Forum
(followed by wine & cheese lunch for Division members)
Tuesday, August 21st, 3.30 –6.00pm Section Open Programme
Thursday August 23rd, 8.30am – 5.00pm Division Workshop (details below)
Friday, August 24th 10.15 am-12.15 pm, Standing Committee II

Standing Committee of the Section on Classification and Indexing

The Standing Committee at present has 19 members, and the new committee, following this year's elections, and that will take over in Boston remains at the same figure. The present membership (until the end of teh Boston Conference) is: **Marje Aasmets** (Estonian Academic Library, Tallinn, Estonia), **Lois Mai Chan** (School of Library and Information Science, Lexington, Kentucky), **Adriana Király** (Biblioteca Judeteana "Octavian Goga" Cluj, Romania), **Pia Leth** (Kungl. Biblioteket, Stockholm, Sweden), **Ia McIlwaine** (University College London, UK), **Max Naudi** (Bibliothèque nationale de France), **Edward Swanson** (late of Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, USA), **Marie-Martine Tomich** (Bibliothèque de l'Université René Descartes, Paris, France), **Júlio Vaz dos Santos Rodrigues**, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal), **Marcia Zeng** (Kent State University, USA), **Jon Anjer** (Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science, Oslo College, Oslo, Norway), **Michel Fournier** (Université Laval, Québec, Canada), **Friedrich Geisselmann** (Universitätsbibliothek Regensburg, Germany), **Magda Heiner-Freiling** (Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **Elisabet Lindkvist Michailaki** (The Swedish Parliament, Stockholm, Sweden), **Gerhard Riesthuis** (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands), **Irina Tsvetkova** (National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, Russia).

The new committee assumes office at the end of the Boston Conference, when the new members join and the ones who have completed their term of office depart. We hope to see both sets of people at our meetings in Boston.

The Standing Committee has one observer: **Marie-France Plassard** (IFLA UBCIM Programme Director), Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt am Main, Germany)

Programme for Boston

Division of Bibliographic Control

Open Forum
Report on Sections' activities.
Update of Projects
- UBCIM Report
- FRANAR
- ICNBS
News and discussion

Joint Workshop Division of Bibliographic Control and UBCIM/Permanent UNIMARC Committee

Information exchange in the 21st century: formats and standardization

In reference to several recommendations addressed to IFLA and UBCIM related to work towards the compatability of the UNIMARC and MARC 21 formats, the UBCIM Programme and Permanent UNIMARC Committee are organizing a workshop jointly with the division of
-----> Division
Bibliographic Control. This Workshop will have as its main intention the presentation of nnew
-----> new
developments but will also provide a forum for discusszion between users of the formats as
-----> discussion
well as those responsible for their maintenance.

Topics covered will include the presentation of the new UNIMARC/Authorities, the new UNIMARC Classification Format, as well as discussion of mapping from both UNIMARC and MARC 21 to XML/HTML. Treatment of electronic resources in both formats, and of other special materials such as music, will be discussed. It is hoped that major utilities such as OCLC and RLG will participate in the workshop.

Section on Classification and Indexing

Open session   "Education and knowledge organization"

"Teaching classification in the 21st century". Pat OYLER (Professor, Simmons College, Boston, USA)

"Knowledge organisation and information retrieval in times of change – concepts for education in Germany". Winfried GÖDERT (Professor, Fachhochschule Köln. Cologne, Germany)

"Classification in a modern and sustainable LIS curriculum: the case of Croatia". Aida SLAVIC (Lecturer, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia)

"Issues on the teaching of subject retrieval at Mexican LIS schools". Dr Filiberto Felípe MARTINEZ ARELLA (Coordinador del Colegio de Bibliotecologia, Facultad de Filosofia y Letras, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico)

Abstracts of papers for the open programme of the Section at Boston

Teaching classification in the 21st century
(Pat Oyler)

Classification instruction in the new millenium will be markedly different because the focus and needs of our users have altered as have information formats. Although the purpose of classifying information remains the same in the 21st century as in the 20th century – assisting users in locating relevant information – we must teach the process in such a way that the librarian or information scientist will be able to apply that knowledge to the organization of information in any format. Teaching classification during the past century was, in some cases, a practical approach for parking information in stacks. While a theoretical overlay was present, the thrust of the courses was not the organization of information but the organization of books in catalogs and on shelves. In the world of the 21st century with a variety of formats, the theoretical basis is becoming more important. The challenge for library and information science educators is to educate the classifiers to organize the formats of the future while still responding to the need to classify print materials in libraries. The focus of this paper is on teaching classification and organization of information for access whether the information is in digital form, in the World Wide Web, in databases, or in print form in books on shelves.

Knowledge organisation and information retrieval in times of change: Concepts for education in Germany
(Winfried Goedert)

A survey is given, how modifications in the field of the information processing and technology have influenced the concepts for teaching and studying the subjects of knowledge organization and information retrieval in German universities for library and information science.

The discussion will distinguish between fields of modifications and fields of stability.

The fields of the modifications are characterised by procedures and applications in a more practical sense. On one hand they can be described by an integrated viewpoint on information indexing and retrieval and on the other hand they can be featured through following trends:

- From catalogs to OPACs and WebOPACs
- From cataloging to intelligent retrieval information and search engines with user friendly interfaces
- From the local catalog to cooperative indexing and retrieval in heterogeneous networks
- From the intellectual task of indexing to automatic indexing
- From systems of rules to structured description tiers (e.g. concepts of metadata)
- From description and evaluation to developing and design of products

The fields of stability are characterised by theory and methods and can be described by following topics:

- Foundations of knowledge organisation and information indexing (for example in philosophy, linguistics, computer science, cognitive sciences)
- basics of the development and design of documentary languages
- basics of Information retrieval

Wissensorganisation und Information Retrieval im Wandel Konzepte für die Ausbildung in Deutschland

Es wird ein Überblick gegeben, wie sich die Veränderungen sich im Bereich der Informationsverarbeitung und –technik auf die Gestaltung von Studienkonzepten im Bereich Wissensorganisation und Information Retrieval in deutschen bibliothekarischen Ausbildungseinrichtungen ausgewirkt haben.

Dabei wird unterschieden in Bereiche der Veränderungen und in Bereiche der Stabilität.

Die Bereiche der Veränderungen lassen sich den Verfahren und Anwendungen in der Praxis zuordnen. Sie sind zum einen geprägt durch eine integrative Sicht auf Indexierung und Information Retrieval und lassen sich zum anderen durch folgende Trends charakterisieren:

- Von Katalogen zu OPACs und WebOPACs
- Von der Katalogisierung zum intelligenten Information Retrieval und Suchmaschinen mit benutzerfreundlichen Interaktionsschnittstellen
- Vom lokalen Katalog zum kooperativen Erschließen und Retrieval in heterogenen Netzen
- Von intellektueller zu automatischer Indexierung
- Von Regelwerken zu strukturierten Beschreibungsebenen (z.B. Metadaten)
- Von Beschreibung und Bewertung zu Entwicklungen und Produktdesign

Die Bereiche der Stabilität lassen sich der Theorie und den Methoden zuordnen und sind durch folgende Themen beschreibbar:

- Grundlagen der Wissensorganisation und Informationserschließung (z.B. in Philosophie, Linguistik, Informatik, Kognitionspsychologie)
- Grundlagen der Gestaltung von Dokumentationssprachen
- Grundlagen des Information Retrieval

Classification in a modern and sustainable LIS curriculum: the case of Croatia
(Aida Slavic)

The first Library school in Croatia was established in 1975 at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, offering an undergraduate degree in librarianship. The curriculum was based upon American LIS educational practice in the seventies, with orientation towards a more European library tradition and current Croatian library practice. In 1985, Librarianship became a part of the Department of Information Sciences and this determined its future development to be more in line with the broader area of information studies. Consequently changes to the curricula in the following years were influenced by the fact that librarianship started to view itself as a part of the information studies field rather than merely the education of library staff.

The manner in which indexing has been taught in this library school is very much determined by the information science environment and the practice in Croatian libraries. The Croatian approach to teaching classification, for instance, is very different from American library schools (although American schools were a good model in many other respects). Traditionally, classification in Croatian public, academic and special libraries is used not only for shelf arrangement but even more importantly for information retrieval supported initially with classified catalogues and more recently by OPACs.

Because of the interaction and close connection with other South Slavonic languages in the historical, cultural and political boundaries of South-East Europe in the past centuries, alphabetical indexing languages proved not to be a suitable solution in this multilingual and multiscript environment. Although, there are several subject-heading systems in existence, they are used only in libraries in which they have been developed. Library classification on the contrary, proved to be more reliable. This was even more so when in the fifties Universal Decimal Classification became the official classification system for the national, public, academic and most special libraries in the former Yugoslavia. UDC proved to be literally

universal as it bridged different libraries, different collections, different languages and different scripts.

In Croatian libraries today, library services ranging from acquisition and information services to collection management and selective dissemination of information relies upon classification. In book processing, for instance, book classification is detached from cataloguing as classification is regarded too important to be carried out by cataloguers who focus primarily on the formal description of the documents and do not need to be highly educated to follow strict and proscribed cataloguing rules. While in many Croatian libraries cataloguers did not have university degrees or a degree in librarianship, it was a completely different situation for classificators. It could be said that classificators have always been among the best educated and most appreciated librarians in Croatian libraries. They represent a prototype of the librarian at its best. Being "subject specialists" and "information gatekeepers" they divide their time between the reference desk and book processing. It is natural that this influences how classification is taught in Croatia.

The development of library systems and information and communication technology has further shaped the approach to the teaching of indexing and put particular emphasis on the role of classification in the network environment. The context of the global information environment has changed the scope of the application of knowledge organisation tools. The need for adaptation, rethinking, and re-use of classification systems in this environment can be satisfied only by building on both sound theoretical and widely applicable knowledge of classification structures and systems, and complete knowledge of information systems in which these have to be applied. Library classification in this context represents both information presentation and retrieval i.e. a discovery tool.

The Croatian tradition in teaching classification has a good foundation to introduce this wider approach to teaching classification as a retrieval and knowledge organisation tool. There are currently two teaching modules focussing on classification: "Theory of Classification" and "Classification and Classification Systems". While the first is a mandatory course for all students in the Department of Information Science (Archive and Museum Studies, Librarianship and Information Science), the latter one is mandatory for the students of Librarianship only.

LIS education in Croatia strives towards a better understanding of technology that is more connected with a better knowledge of content analysis and different indexing languages, as these are likely to be combined. Library classification as a tool is very susceptible to tailoring and adapting for various uses. However, this might be restricted by different structures of library systems and their different purposes. Enumerative, semi-enumerative or faceted classification function differently. Although these have always had their place in the classification syllabus, they become increasingly important today when classification skills are applied outside of the library community.

References:

Buckland, M. The "liberal arts" of library and information science and the research university environment. // Proceedings CoLIS2 , Second International Conference on Conception of Library and Information Science : integration in perspective, October 13-16, 1996 / editors Peter Ingwersen, Niels Ole Pors. Copenhagen : The Royal School of Librarianship, 1996 pp. 75-84

Cochrane, P. A; Markey, K. Preparing for the use of classification in online cataloging systems and online catalogs. Information technology and libraries, 4, June (1985), 91-111

Gorman, M. How cataloguing and classification should be taught : a manifesto. // AACR, DDC, MARC and friends : the role of CIG in bibliographic control / edited by John Byford, Keith V. Trickey and Susi Woodhouse. London : Library Association, 1993. pp. 111-125.

Kwasnik, Barabara H.. The role of classification in knowledge representation and discovery. // Library Trends, Vol 48 1(1999), 22-47.

Lasic-Lazic, Jadranka; Aida Slavic. How to adapt a traditional LIS education curricula to the new needs of knowledge organisation: example of the course Library Classification and Classification Systems. // Shaping the Knowledge society : proceedings of 6th International BOBCATSSS Symposium, January 26-28 1998 / edited by Camilla Moring, Anders Christiansen, Nanna Kann-Rasmussen. Copenhagen : Royal School of Library and Information Science, 1998. pp 224-236.

Marchionini, G. Information seeking in electronic environments. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Markey, Karen; Demayer, Ann. Dewey Decimal classification online project: evaluation of a Library Schedule and Index integrated into the subject searching capabilities of an online catalog: final report to the Council on Library Resources. Dublin, OH : OCLC Online Computer Library Center, 1986.

Svenonius, E. Use of classification in online retrieval.// Library resources & technical services, January/March (1983), 76-80.

Svenonius, E. The intellectual foundation of information organization, Cambridge,Ma, London: The MIT Press, 2000.

Weinberg, B. H. Complexity in indexing systems-abandonment and failure: implication for organizing the Internet ASIS, Annual Conference Proceedings, October 19-24, 1996
http://www.asis.org/annual-96/ElectronicProceedings/weinberg.html

Issues on the teaching of subject retrieval at Mexican LIS schools
(Filiberto Felípe Martinez Arella)

Subject searching is one of the most important retrieval features to get useful information from catalogs. Subject searching in catalogs had only been founded in controlled language but OPACs have included new ones like keyword searching. This fact means LIS students should learn controlled and free language attributes to get success in cataloging and reference work. This paper shows how subject retrieval has been considered in the curricula of Mexican LIS schools. Likewise, it proposes some actions to improve teaching of subject searching.

Subject Retrieval in a Networked Environment

IFLA Sections on Classification and Indexing & Information Technology

Satellite Conference, OCLC, Dublin, Ohio, August 14th-16th

Draft Programme

Tuesday, 14 August
13:00 - 13:30 Registration

13:30 - 14:00 Welcome

14:00 - 15:00 Keynote Lecture
Speaker: Clifford Lynch, Executive Director, CNI

15:00 - 15:30 Break & Demonstrations

15:30 - 16:30 **Session 1: Retrieval in a Multilingual Environment**
Freyre, E. & Naudi, M. MACS: subject access across languages and networks.
Riesthuis, G. Information languages and multilingual subject access.

16:30 - 17:30 **Session 2: Retrieval across Multiple Vocabularies I**
Olson, T. Integrating LCSH and MeSH in library catalogs.
Koch, T.& Neuroth, H. Renardus: cross-browsing European subject gateways via
a common classification system (DDC).

17:30 - 19:30 Dinner at OCLC
Speaker: Stu Weibel, Consulting Research Scientist, OCLC Office of Research

Wednesday, 15 August
08:00 - 08:30 Continental Breakfast

08:30 - 10:00 **Session 3: Retrieval across Multiple Vocabularies II**
Kuhr, P. Putting the world back together: mapping multiple vocabularies
into a single thesaurus.
Geisselmann, F. Methods of access in a database of e-journals.
Olson, H. & Ward, D.B. Mundane standards, everyday technologies,
extraordinary access.

10:00 - 10:30 Break & Demonstrations

10:30 - 11:30 **Session 4: Cross-Sectoral Retrieval**
Nicholson, D. & Wake, S. High-level thesaurus project: an overview.
Garrison, W. & Bishoff, L. The Colorado digitization project: subject access
issues.

11:30- 12:30 Lunch

12:30 - 14:30 **Session 5: Domain-Specific Retrieval**
Hudon, M. Subject access to Web resources in the field of education.
Qin, J. & Chen, J. A multi-layered, multi-dimensional representation of
digital educational resources.
Slavic, A. General library classification in learning material metadata: the

application in IMS/LOM and DCMES metadata schemes..
Beghtol, C. The Iter project: international standard subject access to
Medieval and Renaissance materials (400-1700).

14:30 - 15:00 Break and Demonstrations

15:00 - 17:00 **Session 6: Tool Development for Retrieval**
Burke, M. Personal construct theory as a basis for user-driven
classification of visual images.
Green, R. & Bean, C. Improving subject retrieval with frame representation.
Zeng, M. & Chen, Y. Features of an integrated thesaurus management and
search system for the networked environment.
Van Waart, P. An introduction to Global Classification Data.

17:00 - 18:00 Demonstrations/Tour of OCLC

18:00 - 19:30 Reception in Honor of the 125th Anniversary of the Dewey
Decimal Classification (DDC) System

Thursday, 16 August
08:00 - 08:30 Continental Breakfast

08:30 - 10:00 **Session 6: Transformation of Traditional Tools for the Web
Environment I**
Cordiero, I. From library authority control to network authoritative
metadata sources.
O'Neill, E.T. et al. FAST: faceted application of subject terminology.
Devadason, F. J. Faceted indexing application for organizing and accessing
Internet resources.

10:00 - 10:15 Break

10:15 - 11:45 **Session 7: Transformation of Traditional Tools for the Web
Environment**
Godby, C.J. & Reighart, R. The Library of Congress Classification as a
knowledge base for the automatic classification of Internet resources.
McIlwaine, I. UDC and WWW.
Vizine, D. & Thompson, R. DDC-classified displays of NetFirst search
results.

11:45 - 12:15 Wrap-up
Speaker: Erik Jul, Executive Director, OCLC Institute

12:15 - 13:00 Box Lunch/Depart for Airport

Full details for registration at: http://www.oclc.org/events/ifla/
              Information: westalls@oclc.org

Bibliothèque nationale de France

Elisabeth Freyre, BnF/DRI, IFLA IT Section
Max Naudi, BnF/DSR, IFLA Section on classification and indexing

Proposal for a presentation at satellite meeting
"Subject retrieval in a networked world"

MACS: Subject access across languages and networks

Multilingual access is by far one of the major issues being raised by the networked environment, as the technical infrastructure to provide remote access is more than ever affordable and stable but existing search and retrieval systems still remain mostly featured for one linguistic community.

Libraries are now able to provide global networked access to bibliographic catalogues because the information structure and the technology to make catalogues interoperable is there for many years - through protocols such as Z39.50 - and became popular with the Web. But all the cataloguing content is provided in the language of the catalogue, that is to say in the language of the audience for which it was, and still is, originally intended, so reducing most of the technical benefits.

This affects the international usability of the catalogue in several aspects, not all equally important. Whilst search and retrieval of records can still be managed without considering cataloguing notes the same is not true in what concerns access points. And from among these, subject access points are the most crucial ones: they represent the real access to the content of documents, and they simply cannot be used by users not mastering the language of the catalogue. To cope with this issue means exploring practical ways to provide multilingual access features.

For answering to this task, MACS aims at developing a system for providing multilingual subject access for end-users to networked bibliographic catalogues, by mapping subject terms used by the correspondent subject heading languages.
Launched in 1997, MACS is a co-operative project between four National libraries (BL, BnF, DDB and SNL), on behalf of CENL (Conference of European National Libraries), involving three subject heading languages - LCSH, RAMEAU and SWD/RSWK - and dealing with three languages: English, French and German.

During the first two years the project team focused on identifying the issues, devising methodologies and analysing the feasibility of building features to provide users with multilingual access to remote catalogues. By the end of 1999 it was decided to build up a facility to test how such features could be realised in order to allow users to have subject access to different bibliographic databases using their own language.

During the year 2000, a prototype was developed by Index Data Aps and Tilburg University to confirm the feasibility of the Project's objectives and to settle technical and organisational requirements.
This prototype demonstrates how users can search, how subjects are retrieved, how access to the catalogues through Z39.50 can be done and how search results are displayed.

A live presentation of the results obtained with the MACS prototype, containing about 3,000 subject headings, will show the benefits of the MACS approach:
- Availability of foreign catalogues for national users in their own language;
- Access to each catalogue for every user in its own language, in a monolingual (e.g. German speaking user of the BnF catalogue) as well as in a multilingual environment (e.g. French speaking user of the SNL catalogue)
- Subject cataloguing work made easier for librarians, and subject heading languages enhanced by this process of interlibrary cooperation.

With the availability of this prototype, the various methods already experienced to establish the links between the three SHLs have been reviewed and merged in order to scale it up by means of its specific mechanisims.
Such methods have been implemented in order to generate, in the shortest period and at the best cost, a significant amount of multilingual equivalences, a critical mass needed to turn MACS into the stage of being considered operational.

The presentation will describe the methods and processes adopted for the establishing and maintening of different language term equivalences in a decentralized management structure, that involves not only the international level of the co-operation amongst the leading institutions, but also the national level, where the work is partially shared, especially in the netwok that supports RAMEAU.
The paper will focus on explaining lessons learned from the Project work carried out so far, emphasising issues in mapping subject headings, and identifying difficulties and constraints faced during this rich collaborative work as well.

To conclude, a future perspective will be provided for what we can now call the MACS System.

Meeting of the Working Group for Multilingual Information Languages, 17 and 18 January 2001, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

On invitation of Die Deutsche Bibliothek the working group could meet in the National Library of Germany.

Present were:

Lois Mai Chan [USA]
Magda Heiner-Freiling [Germany]
Martin Kunz [Germany]
Dorothy MacGarry [USA]
Ia McIlwaine [United Kingdom]
Max Naudi [France]
Gerhard J.A. Riesthuis [The Netherlands] (Chairperson)

During the two day meeting two subjects were discussed at length: the MACS project and ISO 5964-1985 'Documentation – Guidelines for the establisment and development of multilingual thesauri'.

An overview of the MACS project is given in a paper by Patrice Landry ' The MACS Project : Multilingual Access to Subjects (LCSH, RAMEAU, SWD)' at the workshop of the Section for Classification and Indexing at the IFLA Conference in Jerusalem. This paper can be found on the IFLANET (URL: www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/165-181e.pdf). In the discussion at the meeting some points were stressed:

- The starting point of the MACS project was pragmatic: the end-user should find the same data in the three OPACs involved (Die Deutsche Bibliothek (Frankfurt), Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) and the British Library (London) irrespective of the question which one of the three different information languages she or he uses.
- There is no translation of terms involved. The transfer from one information language to another is done by concordance.
- The three information languages: LCSH (British Library), RWSK/SWD (Die Deutsche Bibliothek) and Rameau (Bibliothèque Nationale) are based on literary warrant, not built beforehand based on theoretical considerations.

A main conclusion of the discussion about ISO 5964 was that when it is agreed that each descriptor in one language of a multilingual thesaurus should have an equivalent term in all other languages of the thesaurus, this standard is still valid. It is however necessary to add guidelines how to handle if this agreement does not exist. This means that in the case of non-equivalence (see 9.2.1 of the standard) no loan or coined terms are used in the languages where the equivalent term does not exist, but that other devices have to be used. An argument against loan and coined terms is that an end users can not use them without studying the thesaurus in depth. Possible devices were discussed but no decisions were taken.
Another conclusion of the discussion was that much attention have to be given to the examples. Many of them are not correct.
In the chapter on thesaurus display attention to display online should be given.

Amsterdam, June 12, 2001
Dr. Gerhard J.A. Riesthuis