

Editorial

"Environmental Knowledge Organization..."

These are the first three words of the topic of ISKO's first European Conference on a subject area - here the Environmental Sciences - , which is to be held in Bratislava, Sept. 14-16, 1994 (for the preliminary program, see under ISKO News). The topic continues "... and *Information Management, Classification, Terminology, Thesauri, and Software*". Yes, we dare to start bringing together colleagues from our field with those from a most complicated and as yet not consolidated area of knowledge to see what both can profit from each other's knowledge through listening to our mutual problems and discussing solutions and ways of improvement.

Thirty years ago "environment" was regarded as a "mission-oriented field", as against the discipline-oriented ones of long standing. And its interdisciplinary character was stressed because of the many disciplines involved in its development and the influences of a healthy or of a disturbed environment on the biosphere and human life.

We are now facing the exciting situation that the *Mission* of 30 years' work seems to enter into a manifesting state, i.e. into an autonomous field of science and technology with its implications on knowledge organization as well. Should we not be eager to try to understand this development in terms of our terms and concepts?

We invited theoreticians and practitioners as well as responsible managers of the environmental area in order to meet indeed the entire scope of matters involved in the conceptual mastery of the so-called Environment or Ecology. Mr. Anthony J.N. JUDGE, from the Union of International Associations, whom I mentioned already in my Editorial of the last issue as having compiled the most valuable *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* (see also the book review by Yu. Shrejder in Int. Classif. 91-4, p.235) will be our keynote speaker, as he was heavily involved in 1992 in trying to create an Inter-Sectoral Dialogue to the Earth-Summit Conference in Rio de Janeiro. And the president of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts and also a member of the Club of Rome, Prof. Dr. Felix UNGER will be the concluding speaker with a paper on "Global environmental challenges: An approach to a new integrative science".

Now, all of you our interested colleagues who may not be able to participate, I would like to ask for the favor of sending your positive accompanying thoughts during these days to Bratislava in order that something really productive will evolve from this conference and encounter! And I would also like to put the question: If you were to devise a faceted classification scheme or a thesaurus for this area of the environmental sciences, how would you go about it?

Faceted classification - in this issue again pointed out as a genuine paradigm in our field by one of our almost 40 Chinese ISKO members, Mrs. XIAO - means not only the regressing in any subject field to ultimate categories of form but also the

syntactically meaningful arrangement of the facets according to a sentence structure - what Ranganathan termed his "absolute syntax" and for which he had developed his discipline-oriented model of facet formulas.

In our second contribution from two Indians, Mr. PATHAK and Prof. BINWAL, we are confronted with their efforts to approach the organization of knowledge in sociology by an entirely new methodology which might be used in other fields as well - so they suggested. In their arrangement of fields I would have liked to see Ranganathan's syntax theory applied - should this not have been possible?

If we are interested in learning about existing Classification Systems and Thesauri and where they may be found bibliographically we must turn to the article by Y.-K. CHUNG from Korea. She had studied for her PhD in USA "International Classification", and investigated those references in our *Knowledge Organization Literature* section (when its name was still *International Classification*) which relate to literature about classification systems and thesauri.

Notabene: The INDEKS Verlag is about to finally publish the volume 4 of its ICIB Series on "Literature on Classification Systems and Thesauri" by the end of 1994 and is still continuing to list the existing schemes as such in the Section 04 of *Knowledge Organization Literature* of this journal. It welcomes any references from our colleagues to keep it up to date, also in order to publish soon a second edition of its ICIB volume 1 listing the existing schemes as such.

A fourth contribution from the well-known Russian terminologist, Prof. LEJCHIK opens new vistas for a terminological text theory which might lead once to a better identification of new terms and their concepts when generating a thesaurus in a machine-aided way.

Our last contribution by Ch. CHEN and Roy RADA which concerns problems encountered in hypermedia-based collaboration and reuse of texts will probably become helpful in a number of application possibilities, especially for teachers.

Although none of the contributions of this issue relates in particular to the environmental sciences and our efforts in the organization of the knowledge concerned we may perhaps still use the knowledge from these contributions to tackle the relevant problems.

Our somewhat provocative Editorial from KO 94-1 has motivated so far at least two colleagues to write Letters to the Editor. Apparently these letters are at present still in the mail and thus cannot be included in this issue. But I would like to invite again our readers' comments to the items of this journal:

Struggle with us together to develop our subject field for the benefit of all colleagues in the sciences and in particular in information science and in informatics who are dealing with its mission: to better understand, relate and systematize our knowledge in the most adequate and reproducible way!

Ingetraut Dahlberg