

Summary



Subject Cataloguing in the Year 2018 / On Overview (Heidrun Wiesenmüller)

(pp. 26 – 29)

An interest in a particular topic and the desire for literature about it is presumably one of the most common reasons that people turn to a library. It seems then all the more peculiar that professional subject cataloguing in libraries has so few defenders and is often looked upon merely as a cost factor. Good cataloguing creates a bridge between a library's resources and its users by, on the one hand, providing access and, on the other hand, facilitating a quick orientation to the content of documents.

The use of natural language accommodates the user; subject cataloguing represents, so to speak, a low-threshold service. Today's ubiquity of tags shows that the basic principle is also easy for non-specialists to understand. Professional cataloguing by librarians, of course, makes use of authority control and clearly defined rules of usage in order to achieve uniform results. One will always receive the same search results, whether one uses the preferred term or a synonym.

By using subject terms it is possible to search for very specialized topics. To search more generally within a wider subject area, however, the use of classification systems is more suitable. Hence the optimal method is to catalog documents with both subject terms and a classification system. The field of subject cataloguing has been in a state of flux for several years and currently faces a variety of challenges, to which the author provides an overview in this article.

Automated Subject Cataloguing at the German National Library / A Broad Collection Policy Places High Demands on Algorithms for Statistical and Linguistic Analysis (Elisabeth Mödden, Christa Schöning-Walter, Sandro Uhlmann)

(pp. 30 – 35)

Works in digital format have become the largest contingent of new accessions each year at the German National Library (DNB), and the number is rising. In 2016 the collection grew by approximately 500,000 physical items and 1.3 million digital publications, among which were about 280,000 ebooks, online dissertations and sheet music as well as more than one million electronic journal articles, e-paper editions and archival copies of websites. Their ever-growing number is a challenge both for acquisitions and cataloguing. At the same time these developments bring new chances for users, e.g. by making it possible for individual articles to be queried and retrieved.

Subject cataloguing makes it possible to provide thematic structure to large collections and facilitate retrieval. For a number of years the DNB has been dealing with the question of how this process can become automated in such a way that regardless of new formats and an ever-growing volume of items, it will remain possible to enhance catalogs with descriptive metadata that are as uniform and comprehensive as possible. Further advantages of automated cataloguing include, for example, the ability to fully implement classification and subject cataloguing at levels of detail not hitherto possible, such as for the above-mentioned journal articles.

»A« for Artwork / Art and Works of Art in the State Library of Berlin (Gabriele Kaiser)

(pp. 47 – 51)

The Berlin State Library is one of the largest libraries in the world. Its name has been changed several times: from the »Library of the Elector« to the »Royal Library«, from the »Prussian State Library« – due to its post-war political division – the »German State Library« in East Berlin and the »State Library of Prussian Cultural Heritage« in West Berlin. Since 1992 it has been known as the Berlin State Library. And it remains a part of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, Germany's largest cultural organization of museums, librarians and scholarly institutions. It is housed in two magnificent buildings and four locations with holdings of over 23 million items – prints, manuscripts, maps, newspapers and other materials whose range and quality are overwhelming. In its over 350-year old history the institution has been able to expand constantly through acquisitions, donations, and legacies in all areas of intellectual and artistic endeavor. For this reason its collections are not only unique but part of both the national and world cultural heritage.

Works of art were already among the foundational holdings of the library. Along with the well-considered acquisition of books, manuscripts, maps and sheet music, the institution has been the beneficiary of entire libraries, literary estates and special collections. Thanks to such bequests and the purchase of estates, the Berlin State Library has come into the possession of busts and artwork, especially paintings. This impressive collection now numbers over 400 objects.

Translated by Martha Baker