

**Marcella, Rita and Newton, Robert**

A new manual of classification. Aldershot: Gower, 1994. £42.50. (ISBN 0-566-07547-4).

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This textbook succeeds in its aim of building upon the work of Berwick Sayers, whose **Manual of classification** was first published in 1926 and Arthur Maltby, who edited later volumes, whilst still maintaining their traditions. The authors have also ensured that this complex subject is covered in such a way that its relevance to present-day readers has not been forgotten.

The book is divided into three parts: principles and systems; classification policy and practice; information technology and classification. The five chapters in Part I - the largest section at 150 pages - cover the theory and rationale of classification, specific and general schemes and, lastly, indexes and thesauri. The delights of enumerative versus faceted schemes and the qualities of notation brought back memories of early days of professional training. Many of the theories are reinforced with examples from recognized schemes - particularly Dewey. These are described and evaluated in some detail. Some lesser known schemes eg Moys' scheme for law books, the Cheltenham classification (for schools) are also covered. In my view a section on creating your own special scheme in six stages would sit more comfortably in the practical domain of Part II. Chain and citation indexing together with thesauri construction are considered, albeit briefly, in Chapter 5.

With Part II the reader is immediately plunged into the hurly-burly of the library and information environment - shelf order, parallel sequences, broken order, classified catalogues etc. We have a taster of electronic things to come with a rather fleeting glance at classification within online databases. Chapter 7 casts its net very widely and considers the context in which a classification scheme operates in terms of management, policy and environment. Coverage includes selection, adoption and implementation, the processes and costs involved as well as issues of education and training.

In Part III the material has been refined to take account of technological and professional developments. This section has therefore grown proportionally from earlier editions of the Manual. The chapter on classification and the OPAC provides a useful review of research undertaken to explore user search behaviour. The application of computer technology to traditional schemes is also generously covered. The final chapter explores computers and classification from a different perspective - the use of the computer itself to classify or assist in the classification of documents. While the discussion about keyword classification, document clustering and word frequency makes for interesting reading, the fact remains that there is no sign that automatic procedures are sufficiently developed to replace manual classification.

In the tradition of successful textbook production the usual features are present: well-structured chapters with a logical sequence, a plethora of examples, digestible chunks of text interspersed with headings, subheadings and bullet points, 'issues for consideration' at the end of each chapter and a selective list of further reading for the enthusiast. For the student seeking a distillation of seminal works and thoughts on classification, written in the context of contemporary library and information services, this book comes highly recommended.

Cawkell, A. E.

A guide to image processing and picture management. Aldershot: Gower, 1994. £45.00. (ISBN 0-566-07546-6).

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The author is a hardware man. I know this as in this book of two parts, the first part is very about the hardware of image processing. After a brief Introduction, Chapter 2 launches into the workings of image production by television and scanners. We learn for example that:-

NTSC interlaced fields contain analogue signals and repeat at 60 Hz. The 525 lines are typically digitized at 640 x 480 pixels. PAL interlaced fields contain analogue signals and repeat at 50 Hz and the 625 lines per frame are typically digitized at 768 x 512 pixels.

Chapter 3 gets more technical yet and explores in great detail image formation on screen and printer. The chapter makes mention of computer graphics standards and that stalwart of dedicated graphics processing, the Texas 34010 processor. I think I spotted a slip on page 37 where the author refers to 'Pixar' as the company which produces the well-known 'Renderman' software for 3-D graphics: I thought the company was called 'Pixar'. The author, somewhat strangely for someone who deals in technical jargon such as the above quote, refers to common computer graphics operations like bitblitting as 'hype words'.

Chapter 4 on image processing is a little odd, as a list of important concepts like aliasing, thresholding etc. are given capsule explanation treatment. I would have expected more here. Chapter 5 on compression is excellent, although the influential Lempel-Ziv algorithm is mentioned and not given in detail.

I was most disappointed by Chapter 6, entitled 'Multimedia, hypertext, compact discs and pictures'. Hypertext has only passing relevance to image processing. Compact discs are a useful storage medium but not vital to image processing itself. The author seems very much to lose his grip in this chapter as his hardware bias trips him up time and time again when it comes to computer software. Earlier in the Introduction OLE (object linking and embedding) is referred to as a 'page tagging' system, like SGML or ODA, which it definitely is not. In this chapter object orientation is given a bit of a bashing, as is the idea of multimedia itself. Yes, both topics attract hype, but there is substance to their claims for revolutionary progress. Software such as Macromind Director is, I think, unfairly criticized for being hard to understand and use. There is a strange quotation from an old Pournelle column in Byte where Jerry tells us:-

'Access to CD-ROM drives requires two actions. First you have to load the CD-ROM driver with CONFIG.SYS. Then you have to load the MSCDEX.EXE program ...'

This is held up as evidence that computer CD-ROM drives are hard to use. Compared to much of the technical material in preceding chapters, the above operation is simplicity itself. Hypercard is used as an example of a multimedia authoring package, which is unusual as Hypercard, excellent though it is, is far surpassed in this area by other packages (such as the reviled Director). The worst omission is a total lack of any coverage of the vast range of software available for image processing. I have a dozen such packages on my home system alone.

I said at the beginning of this review that this is a book of two parts. As well as being a hardware man, the author is also an indexer. He is keen to impress upon his readers the point that processing and storing images is one thing, but finding them again is quite something else. In this I am in complete agreement with him. We are both indexers!

The second part of the book begins with Chapter 7 which is a masterly look at picture indexing. It is by far the longest chapter in the book and much the best. The author deals with general indexing concepts, and then gives an analysis to date of research into picture indexing. Chapter 8 is a tour through a number of working image storage and retrieval systems employed in a variety of organizations. Thorny issues like copyright are raised here. A long but useful list of references, and a glossary, form the last section of the book.

My impressions of this book are very mixed. Ironically, for a book on image processing, the images are poorly reproduced, especially the diagrams, some of which have captions which are too small to read. The references are badly laid out, in my opinion. The content of the book is a bit of a hodge podge in places, and its currency is dubious - the latest material is dated 1993. I am very impressed, though, by the coverage of picture indexing. This book, then, is a good read for picture indexers and those interested in the technical aspects of image processing.

### **Brophy, Peter**

Opportunities for libraries in Europe. (Library and Information Research Report 103). London: The British Library, 1995. £25.00. (ISBN 0-7123-3296-0).

MEG MESSAGE

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The main objectives of this comprehensive study, completed in June 1994, were to identify and demystify European Union (EU) and other pan-European programmes and initiatives relevant to the UK library and information service (LIS) community; to look at the level of involvement in such programmes and the perceived barriers to participation, and to make recommendations aimed at increasing the level of exploitation.

Although the Libraries Programme is the most relevant to the profession, the main part of the study is an overview of all programmes and initiatives likely to be of interest to the LIS community. This is clearly presented under eight headings, with Research and Technological Development receiving the most detailed coverage.

Currency of information is always a problem in this constantly changing area, therefore the chapter on sources of information on EU programmes, including details of the various agencies and relays in the UK holding this information, is particularly useful.

The section of the report covering a survey carried out with the aim of discovering the extent of UK LIS involvement in EU programmes, confirms our suspicions that participation is low. Paramount amongst reasons are lack of time and the bewildering complexity of procedures. Readers are likely to be further discouraged on perusing the list of predominantly negative comments gleaned from the survey. However, although this chapter is disheartening, it highlights the barriers facing the profession and underlines the need for certain qualities and resources when

embarking on the European funding route. These include patience, commitment, optimism, hard work, ability to fill in project applications, a great deal of available time, and not least, the right partners.

In the short chapter on validation with other states in Europe, it is interesting to note that similar problems and barriers were emphasized during discussions carried out by the project team with German, Swedish and Italian counterparts.

Appendix I is a beginner's guide to the structure of the European Commission and the various Directorate Generals (DGs). Rather limited in content, a more comprehensive directory would have to be consulted for names, addresses, telephone numbers etc.

Appendix II lists projects which were approved under the first two calls of the Libraries Programme. I would have found this more helpful if the relevant partners had been included in the list. Many readers will be curious to know which libraries in the UK have been successful, given that only 20% of proposals submitted under this programme are eventually approved and accepted.

The very useful Appendix III lists the multifarious acronyms that we all associate with the EU. It is not comprehensive, as admitted by the author, (PHARE is listed but not TACIS).

The conclusions reached are not surprising and a number of problems are highlighted which include that of the image of librarians! The biggest problem of all which emerges is the possibility that the LIS community lacks the expertise required to contribute effectively to the major EU programmes. Concerning the lack of a coherent strategy and vision for libraries in the UK, the question is asked 'What is our strategic plan for library development, how can Europe take the lead?'

In response to these conclusions the study makes ten firm recommendations for action. These include the necessity for awareness raising, publicity and promotion of programmes, as well as the provision of guidance and assistance in the development of proposals and the management of projects. The involvement of LIS professionals in lobbying on behalf of the profession and influencing the structure and content of future programmes is strongly recommended. Not least, the secondment of a LIS professional to the Commission would provide a valuable insight into the priorities, thinking and affairs of Europe.

Great mystery and confusion surrounds the funding from Europe issue and it is not confined to this profession. The proliferation of information emanating from the EU confounds all but the most determined. Studies and guides relating to the EU and specific professions are rare and in great demand. Peter Brophy and his team have done a splendid job in negotiating the EU maze faced by library and information professionals who may or may not be considering embarking on the road to Europe.

This study should be essential reading for the profession, as we are in danger of losing out on the opportunities open to us in Europe as well as the chance to work with our colleagues in other member states in order to address common problems and substantially benefit our users. As this study points out, it is essential to remember at all times that assistance from Europe is predominantly influenced by the goals of the EU. Projects which will help the EU to achieve its objectives and, in the case of libraries, those with a strong user focus, are more likely to succeed. Those who survive the process and are successful will open a door that is unlikely to close again.