A
GLOSSARY
OF
INDEXING
TERMS

Brian Buchanan

A
GLOSSARY
OF
INDEXING
TERMS

Brian Buchanan

Introduction

A specialist vocabulary enables us to think clearly about the concepts which are peculiar to our subject, and to communicate easily with our colleagues working in the same field. Without precise labels ideas are likely to remain vague and ill-defined—naming them crystallises them; and until we name them, we can only express ideas by periphrasis, which is tedious, wasteful and mind-clogging. A name is also evocative: it acquires helpful associations which a flat descriptive phrase, however accurately it represents the concept, can never have. There are, however, two difficulties about specialist vocabularies: they have to be learned, and there has to be agreement about the meaning of terms and as to which synonym is to be preferred for a concept.

The special language of indexing is necessary for the reasons given above; but students find it difficult to learn, and there is considerable inconsistency in usage among authors and lecturers in the subject.

This glossary attempts to overcome both problems. It is an enlarged version of a word-list provided for students at Loughborough School of Librarianship, who have found it useful to have formal definitions with explanations and examples available. The definitions reflect the author's usage, but are in general accepted by all indexing lecturers at Loughborough so that there is uniformity in usage in the school and in the Department of Library and Information Studies of Loughborough University of Technology. It is hoped that the glossary will provide the basis for more general agreement on the terminology of indexing.

The terms chosen for inclusion are those thought to be necessary when discussing indexing at basic levels: people doing advanced work should be familiar with all the terms included. There are a number of deliberate ommisions, as well as (no doubt) some inadvertent ones; for example, no proper

names have been included, so that there is no information about particular classification schemes or other indexing tools—unless the tool provides a convenient example of a generally-applicable indexing system (as does *British technology index*) or the name has lost the force of a proper name (as has PRECIS); similarly, terms which merely represent particular examples of a general concept are avoided—there is an entry for Common facets, but not for Standard subdivisions or General auxiliaries. On the other hand, when the concept is peculiar to a particular tool but may have general application it is included; examples include SC's General subjects and CC's Canonical classes. The other important omission is of terms whose meaning seemed to be too obvious to warrant inclusion—for example, Author headings, Title catalogues—or whose meaning is too close to that of an allied term—for example, Compound subject/Compound class.

Synonyms have been preferred on the basis of consensus, but this has been tempered by the need to avoid homographs or near-homographs, which cause confusion; for example, Multi-word subject has been preferred to the more generally accepted Compound subject; Polytopical work has been preferred to Composite work.

Entries are arranged in word-by-word order. Abbreviations in the form of separate initials are filed at the beginning of the appropriate letter sequence (for example, there is a reference from BTI, at the beginning of the B sequence); but those in the form of acronyms are filed as words, so that SLIC is found between SIZE and SOUGHT HEADING. The two headings filed under numerals form the first two entries in the glossary.

There may be up to three parts in each entry; the first, labelled a) is a basic definition with examples where necessary; the second, b) amplifies a) with a fuller explanation or more examples; the third, c) refers the user to related terms other than those already mentioned in a) and b).

See references are made from synonyms and near-synonyms to preferred terms, and also from terms involved in the definition of other terms where the repetition of information seemed to be unnecessary (eg Leap in division *see* Modulation).

The abbreviations for the names of classification schemes used in the glossary are as follows (a numeral following an abbreviation indicates the edition; eg LEC 1 = *London education classification* 1st ed). BC—*Bibliographic classification*; CC—

Colon classification; DC—*Decimal classification*; LC—*Library of Congress classification*; LEC—*London education classification*; SC—*Subject classification*; UDC—*Universal decimal classification*.

To ensure that the definitions given here were not too idiosyncratic, and that most common terms were included, the following standard works were consulted during the preparation of the glossary: AACR (British text) 1967; E J Coates *Subject catalogues* Library Association, 1960; A C Foskett *Subject approach to information* 2nd ed London, Clive Bingley; Hamden, Conn; Linnet Books, 1971; Alan Gilchrist *The thesaurus in retrieval* Aslib, 1971; John Horner *Cataloguing* Association of Assistant Librarians, 1970; International Conference on Cataloguing Principles *Report* 1963; F W Lancaster *Information retrieval systems* Wiley, 1968; F W Lancaster *Vocabulary control for information retrieval* Washington: Information Resources Press, 1972; Derek Langridge *Approach to classification for students of librarianship* London, Clive Bingley; Hamden, Conn, Linnet Books, 1973; J Mills *Modern outline of library classification* Chapman & Hall, 1960; S R Ranganathan *Prolegomena to library classification* 3rd ed Asia Publishing House, 1967; John R Sharp *Some fundamentals of information retrieval* Deutsch, 1965.

I must thank my three indexing colleagues at Loughborough— Ken Anderson, John Shinebourne and Fred Smith—for their interest in this glossary, and for their help in discussing definitions and reading drafts. I owe to a former colleague, David Hope, now librarian of the Welsh National Water Development Authority, the pleasant idea of aestivating dragons (see Difference), as well as a concern for precision in the use of our specialist language.

BB May 1975

9

7–4–2–1 CODING

a) A fixed-field indirect coding system for edge-notched cards. Each field consists of four holes labelled respectively 7, 4, 2 and 1; within each field any number from 0 to 9 may be encoded by opening those holes whose sum equals that number—the example shows three fields used to encode the number 576.
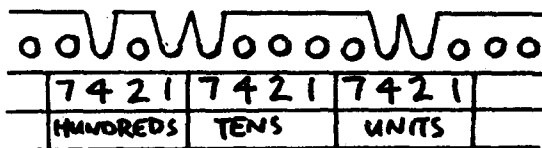
b) Economy in use of holes is achieved at the expense of false drops. These occur for two reasons: 1) because 0 is not positively encoded—absence of opened holes is taken to mean the digit 0—a search on 76 will also yield 576; and 2) because each hole may be used to encode more than one digit, a search on 576 will also yield 472, 174, 572 etc. Both causes are overcome by the use of 7–4–2–1–S–0 coding.

7–4–2–1–S–0 CODING

a) A coding system similar to 7–4–2–1, except that six holes are used, labelled appropriately, and that two holes are opened for each digit (except 0, for which hole 0 is opened). For the digits 7, 4, 2 and 1, which do not need two holes to make up their sum, hole S is opened in addition to the appropriate numbered hole. 0 is therefore positively encoded, and each digit from 1 to 9 has a unique pair of holes; false drops due to these causes are therefore avoided.

A

ABBREVIATED ENTRIES *see* ADDED ENTRIES; LIMITED CATALOGUING; UNIT ENTRIES

ABRIDGEMENT

a) A shortened version of a work, whose preparation has not involved re-writing or presentation in a different form.

c) Adaptation.

ACCESSIBILITY

a) A quality of physical forms of catalogue: the degree to which one user of a catalogue prevents others from using it.

ACCESSIBILITY MEASURE

a) The ratio $\frac{\text{number of entry terms}}{\text{number of index terms,}}$ which gives the average number of references for each entry term in an index vocabulary— one of the measures devised by Kochen and Tagliacozzo.

c) Approach term; Connectedness ratio.

ACCESSION NUMBER

a) A running number unique to each document, assigned by the library.

b) Used for administrative purposes, and, in some cases, as the basis for shelf order.

c) Book number; International Standard Book Number; Sequential order; Term entry systems.

ACCIDENT

a) One of the five predicables: an attribute which is not shared by all members of a species, and which therefore cannot be essential to its definition; eg, any cat may be ginger or tabby or black, without this attribute affecting its cat-ness.

b) If the literature of a subject field shows the need for inclusion of a class based on accident then it must be provided for in the classification scheme. This shows that concepts important in logical classification are not always relevant to classification for indexing.

c) Artificial classification; Difference; Property.

ADAPTATION

a) A different presentation of an original, involving re-writing or change of form; eg, a work re-written to make it suitable for a

12

different audience (children, immigrants), or a work in the form of a film-script or a play based on a novel.

    c) Abridgement.

ADDED ENTRIES

    a) Entries made under headings of secondary importance; eg, if main entry is under author's name, added entries may be made under title of document, translator's name, series title etc.

    b) Added entries may be abbreviated for economy, if unit entry is not used.

    c) Analytical entries.

ALL THROUGH see LETTER BY LETTER

ALLOCATION

    a) The relative amount of notation allowed to parts of a classi-fication scheme.

    b) Poor allocation results in long class numbers in areas which develop rapidly, such as technology, or in areas whose importance has been underestimated, and short notation in the favoured areas. DC provides notorious examples; eg logic uses numbers from 160 to 169, while electrical engineering is allowed only 621.3.

    c) Base; Brevity.

ALPHABETICAL SUBJECT CATALOGUE

    a) One whose headings are the names of subjects in ordinary language.

    c) Alphabetico-classed catalogue; Alphabetico-direct cata-logue; Systematic catalogue; Syndetic structure.

ALPHABETICAL SUBJECT INDEX

    a) The index to the classified file of a systematic catalogue, or to the schedules of a classification scheme.

    c) Chain procedure; PRECIS; Relative index; Specific index.

ALPHABETICO-CLASSED CATALOGUE

    a) A pre-coordinate alphabetical subject catalogue within whose headings generic and similar relationships are displayed; eg Science—Chemistry—Inorganic (as opposed to Inorganic chemis-try).

b) This form of catalogue abandons the direct approach—the main justification for alphabetical subject catalogues—and yet does not achieve collocation as effectively as the systematic catalogue.

c) Alphabetico-direct catalogue; Syndetic structure.

ALPHABETICO-DIRECT CATALOGUE

a) A pre-coordinate alphabetical subject catalogue whose headings are in direct form; that is, they do not attempt to display generic relationships; for example, an alphabetico-direct heading would be Pistols, not Firearms—Pistols; Inorganic chemistry, not Science—Chemistry—Inorganic.

b) This form provides direct access (it is sometimes said to be a 'one-approach' catalogue) provided that the enquirer happens to use the indexer's preferred term in his approach; but generic searches are tedious because of alphabetical scatter. References are used to guide enquirers from synonyms to preferred terms, and from related headings; eg Philately *see* Stamp collecting; Mathematics *see also* Arithmetic. When interfiled with an author-title catalogue, the alphabetico-direct catalogue forms a dictionary catalogue.

c) Alphabetico-classed catalogue; British Technology Index; Direct access; Divided catalogue; Prepositional phrases; Syndetic structure; Systematic catalogue.

ALPHABETICO-SPECIFIC CATALOGUE

a) An unhelpful synonym for alphabetico-direct catalogue: the difference between the alphabetico-classed and the alphabetico-direct catalogues is not one of specificity—both use equally specific headings—but of directness.

ALPHABETISATION

a) The process of putting in alphabetical order.

b) The problems involved include choice of word-by-word or letter-by-letter filing; how to file abbreviations; what to do about modified vowels (eg does Göthe file before or after Goth?) etc.

ALTERNATIVE ENTRIES

a) Unit entries with no headings.

b) These allow the local library to assign its own headings,

without the need to take supplied headings into account when filing.

ALTERNATIVE TITLE

a) A title presented as an alternative to the main title by the use of the word 'or' on the title-page; eg *Hermsprong; or, Man as he is not.*

b) Alternative titles differ from sub-titles in that they cannot be considered part of the accepted title; although their explanatory functions may be similar.

AMPLIFIED PHRASES *see* PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

ANALETS

a) Descriptors in the form of names of concepts joined by relational operators, in Farradane's relational indexing system; eg Hunting /: Firearms /— Decoration.

c) PRECIS.

ANALYTICAL ENTRIES

a) Added entries for parts of documents; eg, for each play in a volume of *Plays of the year*; for additional material by a different hand; for discrete subject areas covered, perhaps unexpectedly, by the document.

b) Analytical entries must obviously lead the enquirer to the document which contains the part, using a form such as

Leslie, *Sir* Shane A memoir *in* Symons, A J A *The quest for Corvo* . . .

c) Depth indexing.

ANALYTICO-SYNTHETIC CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES *see* FACETED CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES

AND *see* LOGICAL PRODUCT

ANNOTATION *see* NOTES

ANONYMOUS AUTHORSHIP

a) Unknown or insufficiently-identified authorship.

c) Uncertain authorship; Unnamed groups; Pseudonyms.

15

ANTONYMS
a) Words of opposite meaning; eg Wet/Dry, Good/Evil.

b) Antonyms may be confounded in index vocabularies so as to increase recall.

c) Synonyms.

APERTURE CARDS
a) Cards which frame a copy of the document indexed by the card, so that retrieval of the card also retrieves a version of the document.

b) This is an application of edge-notched cards. The document held in the card may be in microform, or a photograph of a painting etc.

APPROACH TERM
a) The term used by the enquirer when beginning his search in an information retrieval system; eg, 'What have you got on wireless engineering?'

b) The approach term may have to be converted into a preferred synonym or preferred word form when the index vocabulary is controlled.

c) Accessibility measure; Entry term.

APPROACH VOCABULARY see ENTRY VOCABULARY

ARBITRARY SYMBOLS
a) Notational symbols which have no obvious filing value; eg = ; " " () etc; as in 362(420) "1837/1901" (024.7) (ie a work for children on English social welfare in victorian time; notation from UDC).

b) Such symbols cannot be used alone, and certainly make the notation more difficult to understand; but they extend the notational base, and, used as facet indicators, enable a library to choose a citation order appropriate to its needs while maintaining broader-narrower order.

c) Flexibility(1); Inversion.

ARITHMETICAL NOTATION
a) Notation which is not divisible; for example, in LEC1 the

16