

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CLASSIFICATION

SESSION 2 – LIBRARY CLASSIFICATION

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Session Overview

- This session will help you understand the general concept of classification and its specific application to information management.

Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Topic One : Library Classification
- Topic Two : Classification and Categorization

Reading List

- Read Chapter 15 of Recommended Text – Chan, Lois Mai. (2007) Cataloging and classification: an introduction Lanham, Md. Scarecrow Press.

Library Classification

- The library or information service is one of the systems in the world that makes use of classification.
- Among information institutions, libraries have the longest tradition of classifying information resources
- The modern era, since the Enlightenment, has witnessed a “mushrooming of record keeping” (Black, 1998)
- With the mushrooming of recorded knowledge “librarianship has been firmly centered on a project termed by Black 1998 as ‘disciplining’ the disciplines’.



Library Classification

- A library contains information materials; print and non print.
- The library has the task of arranging these materials for easy retrieval



Library Classification

- That is classifying and cataloging the mushrooming recorded forms of knowledge in its various **compartments**.
- In libraries, classification by subject is extensively used to arrange books and other materials on the shelves or to make entries for them in catalogues and indexes



Library Classification

- Humans started to think for a better way of arranging information for quick retrieval when they started assembling books.
- The subject content of materials in a library are identified and recorded to aid in retrieval (**Subject Analysis**).



Library Classification

- Modern classification started in the 19th Century.
- Library Classification is also called **Bibliothecal Classification**
- Library classification is defined as the systematic arrangement by subject of books and other material on shelves or of catalogue and index entries in the manner that is most useful to those who read or who seek a definite piece of information.



Library Classification

- Classification aims at bringing order or system out of chaos or confusion.
- Classification brings together things which resemble each other and separates those that differ.
 - Similar things together
 - Separate dissimilar things/items



Library Classification

- Library classification helps in the arrangement of information materials in the manner in which the reader is likely to think of them, or at least to require them.
- It attempts to classify in a way that will help library users locate the materials they need.



Library Classification

- The aim of library classification is to get information materials to the reader or the reader to the information materials in the quickest possible time.



Library Classification

- In the library context, classification as a term refers to
 - the development of schemes for the systematic display of all aspects of the various fields of knowledge .
 - and to the art of arranging books or other objects in conformity with such schemes.



Library Classification

- The people who are involved in these two processes are given different names.
 - The inventor or creator of a scheme is called classificationist.
 - The person who applies such scheme is referred to as a classifier.



Library Classification

- Philips (1964) states that the term classification,
- in one sense applies to the arrangement of individual objects or ideas or items into groups according to their degree of likeness
- and combining these groups into still larger groups.
- the process is completed when a single all-embracing group which contains all individuals is reached.



Library Classification

- To Philips division refers to the reverse procedure, where a single group is subdivided according to some quality possessed, not possessed, or shared in varying degrees by some of the individuals it contains.
- The subgroups thus obtained from this division may be further subdivided in the same way, until further division is not possible.



Library Classification

- Classification is therefore a separating as well as a grouping process
- It collects like things and separates unlike things.



Library Classification

- Classification work is built on the notion that what is being classified exists independently of humans.
- The work of classificationists and classifiers is to discover the real essences and represent the kinds and phenomena as they really are, to represent what documents are actually about.



- Topic two:
- Classification and categorization

Classification and categorization

- The terms classification and categorization have brought a lot argument among information scientist as to whether they are the same or different
- They are even sometimes use interchangeably
- Classification is a form of categorization



Classification and categorization

- A scholar called Jacob in 2004 offered an approach in which there is a tight separation between the process of *categorization* of entities in the world based on similarity and the “orderly”, “lawful” and “systematic” *classification* of entities in “artificial and arbitrary” classification schemes.



Classification and categorization

- *Categorization* is the process that involves named entities in the world and the process of grouping them into categories
- This is a cognitive process and is done implicitly and without an articulated framework.



Classification and categorization

- Classification, on the other hand, is a deliberate act to organize a set of entities; a set of rules is therefore set up to determine when an entity goes into a particular class.
- Classification is, therefore, “rigorous in that it mandates that an entity either is or is not a member of a particular class.



Classification and categorization

- classification “divides a universe of entities into an arbitrary system of mutually exclusive and non-overlapping classes.
- Categorization, on the other hand, is viewed as “flexible and creative” and it “draws nonbinding associations between entities”.
- It merely “divides the world of experience” based on entities’ “immediate similarity within a given context”



Classification and categorization

- However, both categorization and classification are, in Jacob's framework, regarded as “systems” and “mechanisms for establishing order through the grouping of related phenomena.



Video

- Watch the video from the link below for further information on the topics treated in this session
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YieAEB48uEo>

Activity

- Use the four recommended text books listed in your study guide.
- Identify the definitions provided for library classification
- Note down the similarities
- Indicate if you noticed any differences in the definitions.

