

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CLASSIFICATION

SESSION 1 – INFORMATION MATERIALS

Lecturer: Ms. Patience Emefa Dzandza

Contact Information: pedzandza@ug.edu.gh



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

College of Education

School of Continuing and Distance Education

2014/2015 – 2016/2017

Session Overview

- Libraries and information centers receive, organize and store information in different formats of print and electronic materials.
- The format of a material determines how its content can be accessed for its subject to be determined.
- The format also determines the storage facilities necessary for keeping the material safe.
- This session seeks to introduce students to the vast range of information materials and the format in which they can be found in information centers.

Session Outline

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

- Topic One : Information Carriers/ Materials
- Topic Two : Classification as a term



Reading List

- Read Chapter 1 of Recommended Text – Kumar, Krishan (2008) *Theory of classification* New Delhi : Vikas Publishing.



- **Topic one:**
- Information Carriers/ Materials



Introduction

- Prior to the twentieth century, information outside the brain was usually stored as symbols or signs on surfaces of stone, animal skin and cellulose.
- Probably every type of surface has been used to write on at one time or another.



Introduction

- Organizing knowledge in libraries means organizing many types of information and media: information stored in physical items like books and information stored electronically.
- Knowledge organization also applies to records that serve as representation of these information materials. Example catalogues



Information Carriers/ Materials

- It is a substance or medium that bears or contains information. It describes the complete range of physical forms for the recording of information.



Types of information carriers

- **Print Media:** these are printed texts and they include books, pamphlets serials etc.
- **Manuscripts:** these are writings made by hand or as typescript, such as letters, minutes of meetings etc.
- **Cartographic materials:** these are materials representing the whole or part of the earth surface or any celestial body at any scale. Eg. Maps, plans etc.



Types of information carriers

- **Graphic Media:** these are two dimensional representation of materials, which can be viewed without a projector (photographs, drawings, charts, postcards) or those that can be projected without motion by means of an optical device (filmstrips, slides, transparencies)
- **Audio Recordings:** these are information materials that have recorded sound vibrations. They are also called sound recordings.



Types of information carriers

- Audio Visual Media: These are materials which can be used to provide information that can be seen and heard. They are recorded on films, discs and tapes.
- Microforms: these are photographically produced documents which have characters in micro images. The characters that have been photographed appear in miniature sizes. These characters cannot be seen with the naked eyes.
- Digital Media: this present information in electronic form. Examples: Databases, websites, CD ROM (Electronic Resources)
- Generally speaking these can be re-categorised into book and non-book materials



Knowledge organization

- Information does not organize itself, it rather has a tendency toward randomness. Unless there are ways to organize it, it quickly becomes chaos.
- Considering the vastness of today's information, and the inevitable and explosive growth of knowledge in the future, it is daunting to consider the task of organizing it so it is accessible.
- ***This is the reason libraries classify.***



- **Topic Two:**
- The concept of classification

Classification

- The word classification comes from the Latin word *classis*, a term used in ancient Rome to distinguish any one of the six orders into which the people were grouped according to their wealth and importance.
- We can decide to sort things into classes by any principle or characteristic we please to serve the ends we have in view.
- The class so made are arranged to form larger classes, and these into yet larger ones, until all the things we have to classify are covered in one large classification.



Classification

- Classification, broadly defined, is the process of organizing knowledge into some systematic order. It has been considered the most fundamental activity of the human mind.
- Carveth Read defines classification as a mental grouping of facts or phenomena according their resemblances and differences so as best to serve some purpose. It is also defined as the arrangement of things or our notions of them according to resemblances or identities.
- It is natural and is everywhere. We classify birds and animals, languages, ethnic groups, diseases, occupation etc.



Classification

- Classification is essential if we want to make sense of the world, which is full of unique creatures and objects. Everybody can and does classify. It is necessary to have systems for managing stored information in a way that allows us to find it again.
- We classify objects according to the class they belong to.
- A class is an assembly of things which are bound together by a quality, or property, which every member of the assembly possesses (Sayers, 1955).



Classification

- Prytherch (2005) defines class as a group of concepts, or of things, assembled by some likeness e which unifies them. He continued that a class consists of all the things that are alike in essential characters, properties and relations by which it is defined.
- Chan (2007) also defines class as a group of objects exhibiting one or more common characteristics, and usually identified by a specific class number in a classification scheme.



Exercise

- Identify five major classes and indicate their elements or members

