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Current Trends in the Classification, Abstracting and Indexing of Media Materials in Modern Libraries

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Abstract

Libraries are information repositories. It is generally assumed that libraries house information with emphasis on books. Media materials (MM) are information resources that are not given much cognizance when users are seeking information whereas they are veritable primary information bearers of great research significance to academics; and soft contents for recreational purposes. This paper gives a description of these special class of knowledge resources highlighting bibliographic elements of organizing them in the library. It then focuses on how to abstract and index newspaper resources for easy accessibility and retrieval with modern techniques.

Introduction

Germane to library practice is the organization of library materials in a way that will facilitate easy retrieval. Users' satisfaction is very pertinent. All sorts of arrangement are made to ensure that a user gets what he wants in the fastest time possible. Of these arrangements, cataloguing and classification, and abstracting and indexing are very important. They are to enhance easy access to library collections and to direct users appropriately. Cataloguing and classification are processes for describing and tagging library materials. Abstracting and indexing are means of announcing what the library has in its collection or means of indicating what is contained in specific library materials.

One can imagine the kind of disharmony and confusion that will be evident if materials are not properly organized or if these measures are not taken to provide orderliness to the knowledge resources.

There are standard guidelines for carrying out these functions in the library. These standards have gradually developed out of practice/convention and they have grown to become rules meant to harmonize the practice of librarianship. Even though, different standards are set for different library materials, the basic principles remain constant. In managing information resources in libraries, information technology has played a resounding part. This paper addresses the modern trends in organizing media materials. Media materials cover all materials which are not bound in form of books. These can be in form of paper, still pictures, moving pictures, sound recordings, realia/specimens, micro computing optical systems, CD-ROM and video-disks. Eجاتوتي (1990) however, included books and periodicals as part of media materials. Media materials in form of paper include charts, games, programmed learning materials, art productions, posters, portfolios, newspapers, cards, photographic prints, etc. Still pictures include photographs, slides, filmstrips, overhead projectors, transparencies and microforms, illustrations, etc. Moving pictures include cinema films and video recordings. Sound recordings include sound tapes (open reel, cassettes), video tapes and magnetic discs. Realia/specimens consist of a scale model of materials which can be plastic model kit and cardboard replicas.

General Rules for Cataloguing and Classification of Media Materials (Mm)

The principles that underlie Anglo American Cataloguing Rules 2 (AACR2) are a sound guide for the cataloguing of all media materials. MM are catalogued just like books. In fact, MM or non-book materials have developed its rules according to the precepts of parts I and II of the AACR2. The rules are then varied when the nature of the material demands it. The bibliographic information put on a catalogue card include: author's name(s), title, producer/publisher, place of publication, date of production, collation (description of the medium). The collation for non-book media materials is different from that of books. It consists of medium, colour, duration, speed, mode of recording, sound on track, number of pieces in a package, number of frames in a roll. The collation for each medium varies slightly to reflect the type of medium. The understated are the salient features sought in describing non-book materials.

1. **Main Entry:** Entry under title occurs more frequently for non-book materials because authorship for MM cannot be easily ascertained in most cases and therefore, the main entry occurs more frequently as the title. Nevertheless, the work for which authorship can be clearly established is entered under author.
2. **Title:** When a work like audiovisual has multiple titles, an order of precedence for establishing the correct title must be followed. (More information should be sought about this in AACR2 part II).

3. **Medium designation:** The type of medium being catalogued is always shown in the singular in parenthesis immediately following the title statement. Statements of authorship, illustration and edition will be listed after the medium designation in the form and order prescribed in part II of the AACR2.
4. **Imprint:** This consist of elements like place, producer or manufacturer, distributor and releasing agent, and date. According to AACR2, the following should be noted:
 - a. Place needs not be given unless this information will help locate obscure producers or distinguish between two producers with similar names.
 - b. The names of distributors and releasing agents are organizations to be recorded if significant.
 - c. Preference is given first to the latest date shown on the material and secondly to the latest date on accompanying materials such as manuals. If materials are undated, outside sources could be searched.
5. **Collation:** The collation components of MM consist of: number of pieces, qualifiers, colour, sound, size, duration, accompanying media and series statement. The physical characteristics necessary for description of any particular medium are included in the discussion of that medium.
6. **Notes:** Contents notes are desirable for many items. AACR provides detailed guidelines for the construction of notes.

It should be noted that the bibliographic information of a non-book media reflects the format which is quite unique and different from that of books. The formats of non-book media vary from one type to the other and this is indicated in the collation. While a book has the title page from which most of the bibliographic information are recorded, a non-book media has none.

Classification is the process of allotting to every item certain notations known as identifiers, which make it easy for materials to be located. No two titles carry the same classification number in a library. Usually, the class number is specific to each title in the collection. Notable classification schemes include Dewey Decimal Classification, Universal Decimal Classification, Bliss Classification, Colon Classification, Library of Congress Classification. Several in-house classification schemes could be developed depending on the needs and size of the library.

Dioramas

525.5	Season - fall and winter (Dioramas)
SEA	Instructo Products, C1966
	Various pieces. Col. (Instructo activity kit)
	1. Autumn 2. Winter

Fig.1

Video Record

307	This is Nigeria (Video Cassette) –
THI	Ibadan: Nigeria Television Authority, 1986
	1 tape: 60 min: Col
	Ace No.

Fig. 2

Model

611	Human Skeleton
HUM	London: Ideal School Supply Co., 1964. 2 pieces:
	White; 30cm - (Human anatomy group 5228)
	Plastic seals included with stand
	Notes by Jack Megenity

Fig. 3

Modern Techniques in Abstracting and Indexing Newspapers

There is great human thirst for news, which can be defined as “the report or account of recent events or occurrences brought or coming to one as new information”. “News” can also be seen as “the same thing happening everyday to different people” which they seek and receive through various channels. As society develops, modern methods of formally gathering news and dispensing it to people were evolved. hence news is presently distributed in many of the mass media, including radio, television, and print media. The most widespread application of the print medium for the distribution of news is, of course, the newspaper.

A newspaper, according to Hearstil (1993), can be defined as a serial issued at stated frequent intervals (usually daily, weekly or semi-weekly), containing news, opinions, advertisements and other items of current, often local interest. The use of newspapers by patrons falls into the realm of current awareness. That is, patrons read recent issues of newspaper to keep up-to-date regarding current events and news while the secondary usage is research-oriented. As with those who perform research, newspaper researchers get to the library with some possessing exact citations to articles that they need to locate in which case one needs to determine if the library owns the newspaper and the date(s) needed. In assisting a newspaper researcher who does not have exact citations to articles, a reference staffer must first determine if there are any indexes that may be of help to that researcher.

A newspaper index can therefore be looked at as a systematically arranged list of articles, or other printed items which provides enough information to identify and trace the items. According to Iivomen (1990),

“for indexing, the typology of libraries according to the subject area of the collection is important, because the collection for its own part creates the framework for the discourse with which the document becomes involved in indexing.... The central role in the indexing environment is however played by the users. The users of the library are clients, whose existence is a necessary condition for the survival of libraries “.

Newspaper indexes are basically devoted to each newspaper. The main point of access for most newspaper indexes is subject, although some approved author entries meant only for columnists but not for regular reporters. Some indexes cover death notices while others do not. The problem however, is that there are no indexes for most newspapers. This is particularly sad because many patrons do assume that it will be a relatively easy chore to locate a specific article for which they do not have exact citation.

In Nigeria like most developing countries of the world, the print media libraries carry out in-house indexing of the newspaper published. These are compiled by the staff of a newspaper either for distribution or in-house use only. The indexes produced in the print media are basically for public service, with profit not being a motivating factor. In most cases, they index the local newspaper which are not published but exist only as a card file in the library.

It is pertinent to note also that indexes are available only on small proportion of the total number of newspapers that have been published in the media houses in Nigeria. The reason for this sad reality is because of the fact that indexing newspapers is a very labour-intensive process which is also very expensive. In addition, there is evidently, lack of trained personnel in the media libraries to participate in the tedious task of indexing the numerous newspaper publications in the media houses.

Indexing and abstracting services in the media libraries are done according to the subjects addressed in the publications and subject access are provided to the newspaper articles through clipping in which the articles of a single newspaper, or of several newspapers, are arranged into files by subject. The introduction of modern information technologies has however made newspaper indexing a much easier process and access to articles, timely and less cumbersome.

As most newspapers in the media houses are not indexed, library patrons usually find it difficult and frustrating to carry out meaningful research since they cannot locate articles easily from the newspapers. Only experienced librarians and researchers are able to locate needed materials from the newspapers. This is achieved by searching through every page of issue after issue. Such exercise is however tedious and discouraging. Therefore, given a choice, an inexperienced researcher will opt to perform

research in an indexed newspaper rather than a non-indexed newspaper environment. It is therefore important for the library staff to be very familiar with the newspaper index so as to be able to assist library patrons who seek and make constant use of the index.

Information Technologies and Newspaper Indexing

Although media libraries in Nigeria, with particular reference to the print, are yet to explore the opportunities provided by modern information technologies in abstracting and indexing newspapers, the manual method of abstracting and indexing newspapers is gradually giving way to modern techniques all over the world. This involves the application of modern information technologies to make processing easier and retrieval of needed materials faster and less cumbersome. There are newspaper indexes in various formats including on-line retrieval system that make newspaper articles easily accessible to patrons. These include the understated:

(i) Microform newspaper index

The microform newspaper index is an alternative to traditional manual and printed index. The Information Access Company produced the National Newspaper index which is stored on one large reel of 16mm microfilm and is housed within a self-contained viewing machine. This index gives coverage of five major journals and newspapers of old and new editions. The microfilm reel is updated on monthly basis and it contains index of over two years.

The National Newspaper index is very easy to use and convenient. The monthly update of the microfilm reel makes the contents very current for the five newspaper covered by the index. The index makes searching for newspaper articles convenient for library patrons. The print media in Nigeria could as well produce microfilm newspaper index to enhance improved services to patrons and researchers so that retrieval of specific articles from cumulative newspaper publications will be easier. Once a media library produces microform newspaper index, it is advisable to discard hardcopy issues regardless of whether those hardcopies are from old or new editions. This is so because citations to them will be useless as library patrons will find them confusing. Examples of newspaper indexes, according to Puccio (1989), include the Florida Times-Union index which provides coverage for most years from 1895 to date.

(ii) Newspaper Indexes in Online and Full-text Retrieval Systems

This is a database of current events. It includes index and abstracted articles from the New York Times and so many other newspapers in the United States of America. The responsibility of producing this index was that of New York Information Bank which has also changed in later years in names and responsibility that it is presently, a part of Mead Data Central, a company which also produces the NEXIS database. Emery (1984) reported that INFOBK remains as a database of index terms and abstracts only, even though it is not put into much use as the full-text NEXIS system.

It is pertinent to note that there has been a widespread emergence of newspaper databases that combined with the retrieval of articles on-line. Many of the full-text databases available presently for use by the staff of the media houses took the place of traditional newspaper clipping file with the application of electronic editing operations. As the database is developed in-house, access is eventually made available for public searching. Although newspaper houses in Nigeria are yet to develop such databases. The experience reported by Veccia (1988); Ola and Ojo (2006) will be of great advantage to media houses in Nigeria.

Apart from the online retrieval systems which provide basically access to numerous newspaper databases, other newspaper databases are available individually. These include Info Globe database which provides full-text access to the Globe and Mail of Toronto and the DIALOG which contains a file of newspaper abstracts online that gives access to abstracting information produced by University microfilms Informational.

It should be noted however that newspaper indexes available in online, full-text retrieval systems differ from the print equivalent as only vital information of economic length are usually online. Therefore a searcher who may need indexes of retrospective newspapers not available online has to fall back on the traditional manual newspaper index.

(iii) Newspaper Indexes on CD-ROM Databases

This is a recent development in newspaper indexing. The CD-ROM technology is being employed to store newspaper indexes thereby enhancing searches like in other databases. This has the advantage of being moved and reproduced easily. Relevant items can be identified and downloaded. It is also possible to achieve exactitude or, at least, actual results through the use of Boolean options applied in the 'advanced search' environment. Since it can be reproduced, it can be sold to libraries and agencies in need of it. The National Library of Nigeria has started producing newspaper indexes on compact discs. These are widely distributed among libraries in and outside Nigeria at a cost.

Conclusion

Libraries, especially large ones house all sorts of materials. The users are mostly ignorant of most collections in the library. Meanwhile, ironically the librarians and other library workers labour tirelessly to ensure that the materials are constantly consulted. Media materials are very relevant for most disciplines. Librarians ought to do more sensitization for their clients about the existence of these knowledge resources. Newspapers, for instance, are not just for daily recreational consumption, they are also very useful for research.

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