Interdisciplinary Purposes of Knowledge Organization

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Motivation

KO should do more than classify documents for retrieval

Identifying further purposes for KO will inform the development of KOSs

We will find that our additional purposes are not well served by existing KOSs (which could be why these purposes are not appreciated)

We will argue that a phenomenon-based general classification best serves these additional purposes

Three additional purposes

Knowledge Organization can Help Writers Place their Ideas in Context

A Properly Designed KOS can be a Useful Learning Tool

Knowledge Organization Should Enhance Social Justice

Knowledge Organization can Help Writers Place their Ideas in Context

We should classify insights also.

Insights and documents are best described synthetically: (Phenomenon X)(has effect N)(on Phenomenon Y).

This reflects an ontological reality of a large but finite set of phenomena that influence each other.

An author examining the relationship above should recognize causes and other effects of X, effects and other causes of Y, other instances of N, and more.

A visual search interface and a phenomenon-based classification could allow the author to readily pursue these related issues.   [but existing KOSs encourage a belief that we can study little pieces of reality in isolation]

Such a classification is also ideal for the semantic web.

A Properly Designed KOS can be a Useful Learning Tool

Students in university – and even in K-12 (and indeed readers more generally) – would benefit from an ability to place any piece of information they encounter within the broader body of human understanding.

Imagine a class in high school (maybe earlier) where students are exposed to a logical and concise KOS that mirrors the ontological reality that we inhabit. Students simultaneously learn about the nature of their world, the nature of human attempts to comprehend that world (both natural and human worlds), and how we organize those understandings for retrieval.

Will aid understanding, information retrieval, and memory.

Note the importance here of a logical KOS.

Knowledge Organization Should Enhance Social Justice

A synthetic approach to classification is inherently less biased.

- Male nurse is classificationally equivalent to female nurse.
- Indeed so is any gender included in a schedule of genders

Disadvantaged groups can gain increased access to information via a KOS that is easy to navigate.

- BCC encourages synthetic subject headings that resemble sentences
- Thesaurus could translate search queries into such subject headings
- The hierarchies are flat and easily visualized

Conclusion

We should appreciate additional purposes of KO.

These guide us toward a phenomenon-based synthetic approach to classification.

There may be other purposes…