
Guest editorial: Knowledge organization systems are an enduring method for information access and control

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Since the first 1997 workshop at the ACM Digital Libraries Conference in Philadelphia [1], networked knowledge organization systems/services/structures (NKOS) has been devoted to the discussion of the functional and data model for enabling knowledge organization systems/services (KOS) as networked interactive information services to support the description and retrieval of diverse information resources through the Internet (Zeng, 2023). The goal of the workshop is to gather participants who will provide feedback and discussion around each presentation/demonstration to help move the work forward, for example, with specific suggestions for further research and development. This Special Issue of The Electronic Library contains a selection of papers that were developed based on presentations, feedback and discussion at the 2022 NKOS Workshop [2]. The workshop was part of the Twentieth International Conference on Dublin Core and Metadata Applications held virtually on 3–5 October 2022. The NKOS workshop was held on 6–7 October as a Zoom webinar.

The papers in this Special Issue exemplify some of the ongoing themes of the NKOS workshop:

- The papers by Ziyong Park and Gema Bueno-de-la-Fuente and colleagues are on the theme of “Quality and Governance.” Park’s paper describes a project supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea to collect and catalogue Korean language KOS in the BARTOC database of knowledge organization systems [3]. Bueno-de-la-Fuente’s paper reports on the types of policies and procedures for knowledge organization among institutional repositories and networks in Europe and South America.
- The paper by L.P. Coladangelo is on the theme of “Domain Modelling.” It focuses on the use of symbolic representations (*nomen*), such as symbols, logos, representative images, video or motion picture depictions or visual elements to identify an entity such as a person like Prince, an organization like Nike, or an event like the Olympics. Each one of these entities has a primary visual referent strongly associated with it (Zeng, 2020).
- The paper by Julaine Clunis is on the theme of “KOS Mapping.” It focuses on encoding concepts related to COVID-19 using an open-source text mining tool for terminology mapping and annotation of clinical trial documents.

Why has the NKOS workshop proven to be a durable forum for more than 25 years? “To classify is human” [4] (Bowker and Starr, 2000). KOS are deeply embedded in human behaviour and communication systems. We are living in the “Information Age”, where the economy has shifted from the industrialization of production to automation. Today, even the production of information is being automated. When faced with information problems of scale, classification and classification systems are potential frameworks that



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enable information access and control. Perhaps this explains the enduring interest in KOS.

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Notes

1. See the summary of the first NKOS Workshop (Greenberg, 1997).
2. NKOS Workshop 2022, available at: <https://nkos.dublincore.org/2022NKOSworkshop/NKOS2022.html>
3. Basic Register of Thesauri, Ontologies & Classifications (BARTOC), available at: <https://bartoc.org/>
4. “To classify is human” is the title of the introduction to *Sorting Things Out*, Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Starr’s ground-breaking book about the nature, deep roots and consequences of knowledge organization.

References

- Bowker, G.C. and Starr, S.L. (2000), *Sorting Things out: Classification and Its Consequences*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
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- Zeng, M. (2020), “Nomen explained”, Getty ITWG Workshop, available at: www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/m_zeng_visual_nomen_itwg2020.pdf
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