

A place for each toy

An interview with Ingetraut Dahlberg

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Imagining that we are talking in an informal way, leaving apart definitions for a moment, how would you describe what knowledge organization (ko) is?

Our knowledge is based on our ability to think and speak. Since our childhood we learned the names of things and stored them in our brains. We also learned that things need a location. The toys used needed to go back into a box or a cupboard. Not knowing however, we also made statements about the things of our environment and by this we created already our “knowledge elements” of these things in our brains and memory. And by the sum of a number of such knowledge elements of one and the same thing, we established, so to speak, a concept of the thing and gave it a name or some kind of a designation, such as *a toy-box* as a «small or large wooden or carton-like box for toys for a child of a special age». And now we can say: all of these properties — small or large, wooden or carton, differing ages — are knowledge elements or characteristics of the toy-box in mind.

What may look like a simple game or language action of a learning child is essentially the same that adults do with the things of their mind on a somewhat higher level, and scientists do when they create new concepts and their names and introduce them in their environment. By the statements of necessary knowledge elements of referents, the characteristics of concepts are created and it is obvious that, if different concepts have the same or similar characteristics, then a relationship between such concepts must exist. On these relationships, of which ko-people distinguish four kinds, among which two hierarchic ones, it is possible to build a classification system with its well-known hierarchical structures.

Since thus concepts come into being by the sum of knowledge elements stated about their item of reference, it is possible to call a concept a knowledge unit. Thus a classification system is composed of singular knowledge units and classes of them.

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