F.I.A.F. COMMISSION ON DOCUMENTATION

REPORT ON EXCHANGE OF INDEXING INFORMATION:

GENERAL COMMENTS:

In order that an international collaboration on this subject can function, the below measures have to be adopted:

1) It is important that as many relevant periodicals as possible are included in this exchange, if the international collaboration shall be of any practical importance for the archives. Thus, the Commission has to work out, in collaboration with the archives, a list of the periodicals to index. This list has to be considerably more extensive than the already existing one.

2) Subsequently, the selected number of periodicals have to be distributed for indexing to various archives, possibly to a small number of archives known beforehand to be able and willing to take on this task.

3) It is of capital importance that these archives then fulfil their obligations and within a well-defined time-limit (e.g. 14 days after the periodical has appeared) forward their indexing information.

4) One could have in mind the possibility that archives, and other interested institutions which are not actively involved in the project, could subscribe to the indexing information at a specific price.

5) This money could then be part of the costs of a central distribution and control of the finished indexing information. This central authority (eventually the Secretariat in Brussels) is to be responsible that all periodical issues are indexed and that the indexing information is forwarded to archives and subscribers.

6) It will be necessary to choose one, maximum two, languages which are to be used for the indexing.

7) It is desirable to work out a standard list of abbreviations of all indexed periodicals in order to facilitate the indexing work (the Wiesbaden proposal or B.S.I.)

8) It will be necessary to work out a standard list of subject headings for use of the indexing of articles not dealing with a specific film or a specific person.

9) It is desirable to work out a systematic standard classification system equally for use of the subject indexing.

1o) It will be necessary to work out standard rules for the number and the arrangement order of the indexing information.

DIFFERENT METHODS OF EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION:

1. SHEETS
2. CARDS
3. CATALOGUES
4. MAGNETIC TAPES

re 1) SHEETS:

At the moment this method is being used but only including a very small amount of periodicals.

Advantages of the use of sheets:

a) The qualified work on indexing and annotaion of the periodical articles has been done, and an eventual transfer of the information to e.g. a card can easily be executed by a less qualified personnel.
b) Archives which do not already index periodicals can use the sheets as they are, as a kind of index of the separate periodicals.
c) The production process is simple and the archives do not need any extra equipment. The distribution, too, is simple and can be very quickly effectuated.

Disadvantages of the use of sheets:

a) In order to exploit the information efficiently, each archive has to do some further work on this information.
b) Unsatisfactory for archives which are already indexing a number of periodicals, as the sheets disturb already fixed working processes without facilitating these very much (this is especially due to the fact that so few periodicals are being indexed).
c) The working out of the sheets (subject order) demands a draft.

Conclusion:

The method can only be considered an emergency solution until a better system has been found.

re 2) CARDS:

This possibility could ~~eventually~~ be put into practice in the following way:
First, a standard-sized card and a standard arrangement of the information on the cards have to be chosen. To exemplify this, a sample card set has been worked out and is annexed to the report.
The cards are written out and duplicated in the necessary number of copies by the indexing archives as soon as a new periodical ~~number~~ _issue_ has been published. The card sets are then sent to a central authority which notes that the concerned issue of the periodical has been indexed, whereafter the card sets are forwarded to the various archives and subscribers. Then the cards can be filed immediately in whatever system the archive prefers, but with reference possibilities concerning separate films, separate persons and other separate subjects. Articles on separate films are easily filed under the original title of the film. Articles on separate persons may be alphabetically filed according to the person's family name. Concerning articles on other subjects, a standard subject heading, which each country can translate into its own language and write at the top of the card, can be found in the bottom left-hand corner. When a standard classification system has been worked out, the class mark together with the subject heading can be noted and then it is up to the archive whether it chooses to file the cards in an alphabetical or a systematic order.

Advantages of the use of cards:

a) Cards can, at once, be incorporated in a card ~~file~~ catalogue ~~system~~ and be used without undergoing any further process. This is to the advantage of everybody, but especially to archives and institutions which have not, earlier, been in a position to index periodicals.
b) Cards are a very flexible material which can easily be kept up to date and adjusted to new filing principles.
c) It is very simple to work with cards, also for people without any archive knowledge.

Disadvantages of the use of cards:

a) The use of standard- sized cards may, in some cases, cause that these cards differ from already used size of cards at the archive.
b) The writing out of only one article on each card may cause space problems.
c) The duplicating process is more difficult and more time-consuming than that of sheets and calls for greater co-operativeness on the part of the archives that are doing the indexing work. The above process could eventually be delegated to the central authority, but the first solution is to prefer.
d) During the making and the distribution, it is more difficult to keep track of cards than of sheets.

Conclusion:

The card system may encounter quite a number of difficulties which can be surmounted, however, if the interest in the project is big enough. But the risk is that disadvatages like a) and b) may lead to the fact that some archives may still want to transfer the indexing information to their own cards. The cards will then be of as little help as the sheets. One can suppose, however, that the advantage of being able to incorporate the card material immediately, will be so significant that most archives will prefer to start a new system in accordance with these cards. The card system is a comparatively cheap way to solve the exchange problem and can, therefore, be recommended as a realistic possibility until more advanced methods can be adopted.

re 3)CATALOGUES:

This possibility could ~~eventually~~ be put into practice in the following way:
A number of relevant periodicals (as many as possible) are selected and distributed between various archives. A central authority is established which is to take care of the editing and the publishing of the catalogue. Each archive sends its indexing information,on specific form~~sheets~~, to this authority. This information is then edited and printed, ~~eventually~~ perhaps by computer technology.
The catalogue should appear several times a year (4 or 6 times) and be cumulated into an annual catalogue. The catalogue should be classified by subject and provided with the most necessary indexes.
Further cumulation in the form of, for instance, quinquennial catalogues will be necessary.
A couple of already existing catalogues should be mentioned:

"RILM" (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale):
is a computer-indexed bibliography of significant literature on music.

"RILM Abstracts", the official journal of RILM, publishes abstracts, indexed by computer, of all significant literature on music. It appears four times a year, the fourth issue being a cumulative index. Included are abstracts of books, articles, essays, reviews, dissertations, catalogues, iconographies etc. Thus, RIlm includes other material besides periodical articles, but even so, it could eventually be used as an example.

"CINEMATOGRAFIA IN PRESA": is published 6 times a year by the Rumanian film archive and is indexing the content of around 165 periodicals. In a report of May 11th, 1969, to Mr. Ledoux, Brenda Davies commented this publication. Consequently, only the following should be said: "Cinematografia in Presa" is an extremely valuable publication, the existence of which all archives ought to know. The possibility of exploiting, internationally, the work spent on this publication, has to be considered. All relevant periodical references could eventually be extracted, and this material could be used as the basis of another catalogue. This sorting of the material would be necessary, as "Cinematografia in Presa" includes many local miscellaneous periodicals which are of no interest to an international forum.
Furthermore, the annotations have to be translated from Rumanian into either French or English. The subject headings are already indicated both in Rumanian and French.
An inquiry ought to be addressed to the Rumanian archive concerning the possibilities of an eventual collaboration, and asking for a more detailed account of the working processes behind the publication.

Advantages of the use of catalogues:

a) All archives can use them as they are.
b) They will reach a lot of people, as many copies can easily be printed of each catalogue; thus everybody interested, not only institutions but also private persons, will be able to subscribe to it.
c) They do not take up much room.

Disadvantages of the use of catalogues:

a) It will be necessary to consult several issues of the catalogue, as there is an economic limit to how often the catalogue can be cumulated.
b) A catalogue cannot be published and brought up to date as often as, for instance, sheets or cards.
c) In case that some archives wish to index more periodicals than the ones included in the catalogue, they will have to work with two different systems, when locating information.
d) The process of manufacture is rather expensive, especially if the catalogue has to be made by computer.

Conclusion:

This system is becoming more and more popular within library and information circles all over the world. Consequently, the Commission ought to examine more closely the real possibilities of introducing this system.
In case that this system is chosen, it has also to be examined whether we ought to go the whole lenght and, on the lines of "RILM" include other relevant material besides periodical articles, just as

we have to examine the possibilities and costs of using computer tech-
nology.

re 4) MAGNETIC TAPES:

One of the most widely used forms of computer file is the magnetic
tape file. Two well-known systems are MEDLARS (indexing medical lite-
rature) and CHEMICAL TITLES.
The magnetic tape and the unit to process it are not unlike the commer-
cial tape recorder. The records will be read onto the tape one after
another to form what is known as a linear file. When an amendment is
necessary, the magnetic tape has to be read into the computer proces-
sing unit, record by record, until the required record is located and
the process must continue until the whole file is transferred to the
output tape. However, a file can be copied quickly, or it can be re-
arranged in one or more different orders. It is possible to go through
a computer file at great speed inspecting each record for some speci-
fied characteristic on each record.
However, the conclusion must probably be that this method is best
suited for bigger subject fields than cinema. It will be excessively
expensive to register a so relatively small subject on magnetic tapes.
But the Commission ought to examine the project more closely with a
view to the further development when the computer method will be much
cheaper.

FINAL CONCLUSION:

Concerning these possibilities, a questionnaire should be worked out and sent
to all archives, so that they get the opportunity of commenting on the
various systems. Thereafter, the Commission should, as soon as possible,
finally decide which system to choose, whereafter the project should be
started immediately. If the project turns out to function on a practical
level, it will, undoubtedly and to a very high degree, facilitate the
documentation work of the archives.

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