

F.I.A.F. COMMISSION ON DOCUMENTATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: INDEXING OF FILM PERIODICALS

BACKGROUND:

For some time the Documentation Commission has been working on a method for coordinating the indexing of film periodicals internationally. Since the same periodicals are indexed at many archives, international cooperation can save time and cut down expenses, as well as make indexing information available to archives which previously have not been able to index their periodical holdings.

Several methods are possible. In the enclosed "Report on Exchange of Indexing Information", the advantages and disadvantages of four different indexing methods are described: sheets, cards, printed catalogues and magnetic tapes.

Some years ago, the Commission started an exchange of indexing information on sheets, covering 14 film periodicals. These sheets are regularly sent to archives taking an active part in the indexing of the periodicals, and to archives which asked to have them sent.

An important drawback with sheets, however, is that this information cannot be directly filed in the documentation systems of the archives without first being transferred onto file cards.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

After careful consideration, the Commission has decided that the best possible solution at present is a combination of file cards and an annual printed catalogue. This procedure will afford us all the advantages and eliminate all the drawbacks of both methods.

CARDS: (see enclosed set of sample cards). Information on cards is up-to-date and can reach each archive not more than one month after the publication of the issue indexed.

You can file the cards, ready for use, immediately after having added a keyword in your own language or a classification number, according to your own classification system.

The cards will be issued in a different colour every year, enabling each archive to eliminate last year's cards from their files when the annual catalogue is issued. This solves the space problem otherwise created by the accumulation of cards over several years.

ANNUAL PRINTED CATALOGUES: (sample pages will be sent to you later). Annual catalogues, containing the indexing information accumulated over a year, can be sold to a film-interested public, and the proceeds will finance the entire project.

Catalogues take up less space than cards. The problem of having to consult several annual catalogues for material on a given subject can be solved by cumulative volumes at e.g. five-yearly intervals.

PARTICIPATION:

The obvious advantages of this project can only be realized if the archives are willing to collaborate actively in collecting the information. By indexing a limited number of periodicals, you will gain access to information on a much larger number.

The Commission has prepared a list of 57 film periodicals of international interest (see the enclosed list of periodicals by nationality). This list can be changed from time to time to correspond to changes in the world of film periodicals.

The most practical procedure is to have each archive index a small number of these periodicals, preferably the periodicals of its own country.

As each new issue of a film periodical is published, the archive indexing that periodical fills out an indexing form (see the enclosed form for periodical indexing, page 1 and 2) for each article, interview and review in that issue. The forms are then mailed to the project office in Copenhagen within a fortnight after the publication of the issue concerned. At Copenhagen the material will be processed, and the duplicated file cards sent to the archives subscribing to them. Information collected during a year is accumulated into an annual printed catalogue.

LANGUAGE:

A standardized system of abbreviations (this list of abbreviations will be sent to you later), will make the cards and catalogues accessible to users in all language areas. Both cards and catalogue entries will contain a short description of content in English. The cards can be marked with keywords in your own language. The catalogue will contain subject indexes in several languages.

Archives may fill out the indexing forms in English or French.

FINANCE:

Once the first annual catalogue appears, this project will finance itself. The income from the sale of catalogues will cover not only the publication expenses of the catalogue itself, but will also pay for the distribution of file cards.

Naturally certain initial funds will be necessary to operate this project until the first catalogue is issued. We believe it would be proper to distribute cards free of charge to archives which actively participate in the indexing, while furnishing them at a subscription fee to other archives.

CONCLUSION:

If the cooperation of a sufficient number of archives is obtained and the initial economic problems solved, we will be able to begin distributing cards in January 1972, and can publish the first annual catalogue in the beginning of 1973.

The Commission hopes very much that the various archives will approve this documentation project. The advantages to all must be obvious, especially in view of the self-financing nature of the project. The information thus distributed will facilitate the documentation work of the archives and be of invaluable service to film research in general.

KAREN JONES, THE DANISH FILM MUSEUM
COPENHAGEN, APRIL 1971