

## Preface

### General Comments

Advances in Classification Research, volume VIII is a compilation of papers and reports of the five breakout sessions of the 8th ASIS SIG/CR Workshop on Classification Research, held in Washington, D.C., at the ASIS Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 2, 1997.

We are pleased with the diversity of viewpoints represented in these papers. The rationale for the Workshop from the beginning has been to showcase the multi-disciplinary bases of classification research. The authors of the papers in this volume have accordingly been asked to write for an audience that may be unfamiliar with the terminology and issues current in the author's own field, and they have tried to follow this suggestion with good humor. The communication across disciplines that the Workshop supports increases the value of these papers for all who take advantage of them as, in seeking to explain assumptions and perspectives that are not shared, participants in the Workshop can deepen and broaden their understanding of classificatory issues in general.

We received papers on a variety of themes for this year's Workshop. Classification systems provide both an overall structure and a set of concepts to guide the information searcher into the domains or the semantics of databases in information systems. However, even in cases where multidimensional classificatory approaches have been implemented, such structures seldom come directly forward as guiding instruments supporting the user's search activity. This very important information about the semantics of the databases is often hidden away. *Albrechtsen* and *Jacob* suggest that classification systems should be designed and implemented as visible and ready-to-hand systematic domains in information systems so that they can function as boundary objects in the mediation of database semantics.

The process of thesaurus construction involves the acquisition, analysis and presentation of concepts and terms. The analysis of the domain of the thesaurus is an important part of the process. *Nielsen* investigates how word association tests can be used as part of the necessary domain analysis. Automatic classification offers the possibility of improved production efficiencies to large document publishers in print and online environments. *Curran* and *Thompson* explore the possibilities of automating the classification of statutory legal materials and consider strategies currently available for doing so. In indexing, terms may be selected from a redefined (controlled) vocabulary or from the text itself (uncontrolled). Text categorization involves the assignment of terms from a predefined (controlled) vocabulary. *Ruiz* and *Srinivasan* present the results of an automatic text categorization study using neural networks.

Finding information on the Web can be a daunting and time-consuming task for most users. *Wang* and *Pouchard* present the results of a study of end-user searching of Web resources. *Lin* and *Chan* discuss "Knowledge Class," a new method for organizing Web resources for individual users. It is a conceptual building block for Web access, and it is similar to a classified mini thesaurus, consisting of hierarchically structured terms on a specific topic or discipline. The five breakout sessions dealt with current research issues on:

social aspects of classification,  
exploring bibliographic classification in new environments,  
challenges in image classification,  
classification structures,  
problems and prospects in thesaurus construction.

The diversity of these interests and approaches suggests the importance of classification research and vigor of researches in this area.

### **Organization of these Proceedings**

There are two parts: the first consists of the papers presented and the second contains the reports from the breakout sessions. Papers, in both parts, are arranged in alphabetic order by author.

### **Acknowledgments**

The continuing success of the ASIS SIG/CR Classification Research Workshop and the resulting *Advances in Classification Research* is the result of the work of many people. The present Editor would like especially to thank all of those who have been instrumental in organizing and supporting the seven previous Workshops, in reviewing papers, and in editing the Proceedings. We would also like to thank all of the contributors/authors for their interest in the Workshop and their willingness to follow our suggestions for their papers. The ASIS administration and office staffs who have supported and subsidized this Workshop and its Proceedings over the past eight years deserve thanks also.

Special thanks go to the Program Committee who reviewed this year's contributions:

Marcia Bates,	University of California, Los Angeles
Allyson Carlyle,	University of Washington
Clare Begthol,	University of Toronto
Raya Fidel,	University of Washington
Elin Jacobs,	Indiana University
Barbara Kwasnik,	Syracuse University
Ray Schwartz,	Rutgers University
Paul Solomon,	University of North Carolina

I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the general support of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Washington, and the specific assistance of graduate assistants Peggy Burns and Jaeyong Chang.

-ENE

Comments or questions may be sent to:

Efthimis N. Efthimiadis  
School of Library and Information Science  
University of Washington  
Box 352930, Seattle, Washington 98195-2930  
Phone: (206) 616-6077, Fax: (206) 616-3152, E-mail: efthimis@u.washington.edu