

# Caveat Fractal: Dissecting The Body of Indexing Theory, Uncovering Complexity, and Moving Toward Performativity

Knowledge Organization  
Research Group @ the  
iSchool

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## Perspectives – Purposes, Philosophies, and Systems:

Purpose of the Process of Subject Analysis  
Provide Best Textual Means to an End  
Bring Together Knowledge of a Like Kind  
Epistemological Potential for Future Users  
Information Retrieval  
Knowledge Organization for Effective Use (against IR)  
Reflect Essential Rather than Incidental Characteristics of a Document  
Reject what is Not Required and Select What is Usable  
Retrieval of Documents  
Make Use of Recorded Knowledge and Wisdom

Purpose of Information Systems  
Provide Best Textual Means to an End  
Retrieval (the mechanical variant of delegated information supply)  
Satisfy Information Need  
To Point to Types of Documents

### Philosophical Schools

Epistemic Categories  
Epistemology  
Essence  
Etiology  
Metaphysics  
Objectivity

As Agreement with Reality  
As Independent of the Individual Who Apprehends  
As Judged by History

Reality  
Truth [8]

## Analysis Ethopœia:

Environment  
Collective  
Collection  
Users  
Analysis  
Orientation and Centeredness  
Representation and Vocabulary Considerations  
Evaluation  
Indexer [8]

The past is not dead, it is living in us, and will be alive in the future which we are now helping to make. [11]

Time: Long, Medium, and Short [4, 9, 10]

It took me years to understand that words are often as important as experience, because words make experience last. [11]

## Elements and Steps:

[Step 1] Pre-Analysis Process  
Level of Indexing  
Automatic, human, or hybrid approach  
Tool provision  
(Element 1) Document (physical and conceptual element)  
Objective and Subject Properties (conceptual elements)  
Message in Text in a Medium (conceptual and physical elements)  
Superstructure  
Model Document  
Parts of the Document  
Genre  
Types of Documents  
[Step 2] Document Analysis  
Scanning  
Perceptual  
Conceptual  
Reading  
Top down  
Bottom-up  
Macrostructural Analysis  
Microstructural Analysis

Listing  
Concepts  
Cast of Characters  
Collage of Impressions  
All Concepts  
Evaluation I  
Analysis by Indexer Independent of the Text's Self-Description  
Essentials  
Impartibility  
Professional Knowledge Interests  
Utility of Document  
Specification of Writing  
Likelihood (collocation or grouping)  
(Element 2) Subject (mental element)  
Cast of Characters  
Concrete, Concrete, and Processes  
[Step 3] Subject Description Process  
The Subject (Indeterminate) Methods  
Purposeful Way  
Immediate  
Remote  
Ultimate  
Overt  
Uttorial  
History  
Context  
Figure-Ground Way  
Omnipresence  
Dominance  
Counting References to Items Way  
Grouping Membership  
Omnipresence  
Appeal to Unity/Approach to Rules of Selection and Rejection  
Form Methods  
Form of Knowledge [12]  
Topics  
Specializations  
Form of Writing  
Category Methods  
Classification  
PMEST  
Fundamental Categories (other than PMEST)  
Integrative Levels  
Reading Methods  
Hierarchical Compression and Summarization  
Construction Rule  
Selection Rule  
Generalization Rule  
Zero Rule  
Reduction Method  
By Analysis  
By Construction  
By Recapitulation  
By Selection  
(Element 3) Subject Description (mental element)  
Reading Element  
Macrorepresentation (lowest possible)  
Argument for Description  
Description  
Hypothesis  
Prognosis  
Evaluation  
(Step 4) Subject Analysis Process  
(Step 4.1) Naming  
(Step 4.2) Translation into Index Language  
As anticipation  
As epistemological potential  
As objective  
Evaluation II  
Selfish Economy of Tools and Jobs  
Purpose of the Process  
Degree of probability a concern or not?  
Multiple a problem or not?  
Using few words and symbols a concern or not?  
Pre-ordered or Post-ordered or neither?  
Rounds and Levels?  
(Element 4) Subject Entry  
As correct?  
Statement and Amplification  
(Step 5) Evaluation of Subject Entry  
User interpretation of the Entry  
Indexer interpretation of the Entry  
Relation to the Collection  
Relation to other Documents in the Collection  
Historicity/Material Evidence for Predicting the Informative Potential [8]

"I've often said that every poem solves something for me in life. I go so far as to say that every poem is a momentary stay against the confusion of the world.... We rise out of disorder into order. And the poems I make are little bits of order." [13]

Labor Re-conceptualization

Meta-theoretical Analysis [1]

Neo-pragmatic Epistemic Stance [2]

History has remembered the kings and warriors, because they destroyed; art has remembered the people, because they created. [11]

So long as the system of competition in the production and exchange of the means of life goes on, the degradation of the arts will go on, and if that system is to last for ever, then art is doomed, and will surely die; that is to say, civilization will die. [11]

The reward of labour is life. Is that not enough? [11]

Performativity, [5]  
Transverse Poetics, [6] and  
How Does a Poem Mean? [7]

Question: How does our understanding of indexing as a complex act inform design and evaluation approaches?

Interpretation [3]

Representation [3]

Document  
Significant Characteristics  
Representation  
Information System  
Tools of Representation  
Users

The common understanding of indexing is a simple two-step process that happens once and only once

Answer: By incorporating the ideas of functional poetry and a temporal metric we can "program" (line up into meaningful order) the complexity of indexing into a performance and from there understand the benefit of the act of this utilitarian work with an aesthetic sensibility of form, execution, and a labor of expression. Indexing to help individuals fully realize their potential and to help them on the path to self-actualization.

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