

THE BLISS CLASSIFICATION ASSOCIATION (BCA)

Statement of Intent

General statement of intent September 2010:

- ◆ The BCA exists to promote the use of the Bliss Bibliographic Classification, second edition (the Classification), and to continue the work of its revision and maintenance.
- ◆ The BCA aims to make the Classification fit for purpose in the current information environment, taking into account changes in general requirements for subject organization and search, and ensuring that versions appropriate to electronic access and application are available.
- ◆ The BCA embraces a policy of open source culture, and aims to make its work freely available to the wider community, and invites the participation of that community in developing the Classification for the future.
- ◆ The BCA website will be the principal means of disseminating information about the Classification, and the BCA discussion list the vehicle for feedback and comment on the Classification.

Publication media

- ◆ The BCA will support a range of publication formats for the Classification: it will continue the arrangement with Walter de Gruyter (Saur) to publish the Classification in a print version, but also has a firm commitment to the further development of electronic versions of the Classification.
- ◆ Both published schedules and drafts will gradually be made available in electronic formats on the BCA website. A longer term objective is the creation of a database to hold the classification data.

Editorial policy

- ◆ The BCA will continue to create a set of editorial guidelines, to assist editors in the preparation and management of schedules, and to improve consistency in schedule format, and the formulation of class names and captions. This will have the added benefit of ensuring that class names are in a form suitable for automatic generation of the alphabetical index and for thesaurus conversion.

Editorial assistance

- ◆ The BCA will encourage wider participation in the editorial process, and will invite responses to the material disseminated on the BCA website.

Editorial priorities

- ◆ The primary business of the BCA is to maintain the Classification for the benefit of its users, and it is now the BCA's objective to complete the Classification as expeditiously as possible. The editors take seriously the need to ensure stability and continuity, but the

revision of the Classification along radical lines should have provided a stable structure within which new concepts can be accommodated without the need for further major alterations.

- ◆ It should also be borne in mind that the Classification is a paradigm for faceted structures, and the practical implementation of a substantial body of information retrieval theory. As such, it is unique in western library and information science. Facet analysis is widely regarded as the only rational methodology for the analysis of subject domains, and the structuring of terminologies and other classification data. It has been proposed as a meta-theory of information science, and has potential far beyond the physical organization of collections.

- ◆ It is therefore recommended that:
- ◆ the BCA encourage the theoretical development of faceted classification as a means of search and retrieval;
- ◆ the BC terminologies continue to be used as a medium for research and scientific enquiry; and
- ◆ the terminologies be available to the scientific community as an open source resource for re-use in future advances, such as Semantic web applications.

This statement of intent reflects discussion in the BCA Committee on 17th September 2010. It was presented at the AGM on 22nd October 2010 when the meeting was supportive of the proposals, with a lively debate on the best ways to carry them forward.