Rearranging the subject catalog at Trinity University

By Richard Hume Werking

Director of Libraries
Trinity University

Ruby E. Miller

Assistant Director for Technical Services
Trinity University

Jay Whaley

Assistant Director for Collection Development
Virginia Commonwealth University

A chronological arrangement to enhance access.

Professional conferences occasionally can be a source for innovations in libraries. A service innovation at the Trinity University Library in San Antonio is a case in point.

At the 1982 ALA Conference in Philadelphia, Jay Whaley, then head of reference at the University of California-Irvine, presented a paper on the topic of "Research on Use and Use Studies." In the course of his paper, Whaley noted that there was likely a benefit to arranging the cards in a subject catalog, or the subject cards in a dictionary catalog, by imprint date in inverse chronological order (the most recent year first). Such an arrangement, he suggested, would result in patrons' encountering, under a given subject heading, the most recent titles first, presuming that patrons searched from the front of a given subject file toward the back.

Richard Werking, then head of collection development at Trinity, was in the audience and thought he would seek implementation of Whaley's idea at the Trinity Library. Such a chronological arrangement of bibliographic entries within subject headings made a good deal of sense to him. From Werking's personal experience as a patron and observation as a librarian, he agreed with Whaley that patrons at the subject catalog often take down only a few call numbers, ending their searches when they think they have found "enough" titles for the time being, whether or not all or even most of the entries have been examined. When patrons encounter only a fraction of the entries, he reasoned, that fraction consisting of the most recent ones is more likely to be useful than the same fraction consisting of the first portion of an alphabet. To be sure, under either filing scheme the user may miss what are regarded as the most important books on a given subject, but the bibliographies and references in the more recent books will usually include the earlier titles and probably will identify, explicitly or implicitly, the most important or useful of the earlier works.

An obstacle to implementing this filing scheme in many libraries may be the large amount of time it would take to rearrange the cards in a card catalog. Trinity, however, by 1982 had had a COM catalog for six years, and all of its bibliographic records were in machine-readable form. Ruby E. Miller, head of technical services at Trinity, took up the matter with MARCIVE, Inc., the San Antonio-based company which produces the Li-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Edition</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Misregulating television : network dominance and</td>
<td>Misregulating television</td>
<td>KF 2840 M58 1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>High tech, high stakes [videorecording]</td>
<td>High tech, high stak</td>
<td>AUD-VIS</td>
<td>PN 4722 I57 no. 306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Sign-off : the last days of television</td>
<td>Diamond, Edwin</td>
<td>PN 4888 T4 D48 1982</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Television in the eighties : the total equation</td>
<td>Moorfoot, Rex</td>
<td>HE 8700.6 M67 1982</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Revolution in the wasteland : value and diversit</td>
<td>Cass, Ronald A.</td>
<td>KF 2840 C38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Additions and corrections to network inquiry pre</td>
<td>United States. Feder</td>
<td>US DOCS</td>
<td>CC 1.2: M 38/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>The networks : how they stole the show</td>
<td>Reel, Adolph Frank</td>
<td>HE 8700.8 R43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Television in the corporate interest</td>
<td>Bunce, Richard</td>
<td>HE 8700.8 B85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>To irrigate a wasteland: the struggle to shape a</td>
<td>Macy, John W., 1917-</td>
<td>HE 8700.8 M33 1974</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>The age of television: a study of viewing habits</td>
<td>Bogart, Leo</td>
<td>HE 8700.8 B625 1972</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Broadcasting in America: a survey of television</td>
<td>Head, Sydney W</td>
<td>HE 8698.8 H43 1972</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Turn that damned thing off: an irreverent look a</td>
<td>Klavan, Eugene</td>
<td>HE 8698.9 K5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>The left-leaning antenna: political bias in tele</td>
<td>Keeley, Joseph Char</td>
<td>HE 8700.8 K4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Television: the business behind the box</td>
<td>Brown, Les 1928-</td>
<td>HE 8700.8 B75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Due to circumstances beyond our control ..</td>
<td>Friendly, Fred W.</td>
<td>PN 1992.3 US F7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Crisis in television: a study of the private jud</td>
<td>Simonson, Solomon S.</td>
<td>PN 1992.6 S47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Equal time: the private broadcaster and the publ</td>
<td>Minow, Newton N 1926</td>
<td>PN 1992.3 US M5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>The great time-killer</td>
<td>Melching, Harold</td>
<td>PN 1992.3 US M4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>TV, the big picture</td>
<td>Opotowsky, Stan</td>
<td>HE 8698 065</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>The age of television: a study of viewing habits</td>
<td>Bogart, Leo</td>
<td>HE 8698 B6 1958</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Television's impact on American culture</td>
<td>Elliott, William Yan</td>
<td>HE 8698 EN5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>The book of little knowledge: more than you want</td>
<td>Ace, Goodman</td>
<td>PN 1992.5 A3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Television and radio in American life</td>
<td>Marx, Herbert L., ed</td>
<td>HE 8698 M3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Out of the blue: a book about radio and television</td>
<td>Crosby, John, 1912-</td>
<td>HE 8698 C78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Television broadcasting - United States - Addresses, essays, lectures.


[etc]
brary's COM catalog. The task was to arrange the entries in the COM subject catalog by publication date under subject. Because the COM catalog produced by MARCIVE is driven by the MARC tag ID (imprint field 260, subfield C, first date), it was not difficult to retrieve the publication date and then file it as the first filing element under the subject heading. The computer then arranged these dates in descending order, thus placing the most recent book as the first entry under each subject heading. With relatively little trouble, this rearrangement was accomplished in 1983. A sample from the Trinity subject catalog appears on page 8.1

Such a filing scheme should also be as simple to implement with an online catalog, and we understand that at least one online system on the market does include this as a feature.

Like many useful ideas, this one is not brand new. For many years the John Crerar Library, established in 1894, employed the arrangement of inverse chronological filing for the cards in its classified subject catalog. That system was in place until 1984, at which time Crerar merged with the University of Chicago Library and the catalog was closed. At the Crerar, and at the Columbia College Library in the 1880s, within each section of the classification the books themselves were arranged on the shelves by date of publication.2

1 In its COM catalog, Trinity uses an “index” format of one line per bibliographic entry. The smaller number of elements makes it feasible for the Library, which holds over 450,000 titles (including documents and audiovisual items), to update the catalog every other month. What is shown here is a sample of 29 of the 78 titles in the Trinity Catalog under the heading “Television Broadcasting—United States,” and 2 under the subsequent heading, as they appear in the catalog.

2 These earlier implementations came to the authors’ attention only recently, well after the procedure was adopted at Trinity. See Herbert Kleist, “Inverse Time Order and Subject Filing,” College & Research Libraries 6 (June 1945):228–31; William Stetson Merrill, “Order of Books by Date under Subjects,” Library Quarterly 4 (April 1934):282–84; W. S. Biscoe, “Chronological Arrangement on Shelves,” Library Journal 10 (September/October 1885):246-47. The authors gratefully acknowledge information about Crerar’s catalog supplied to them by Patricia K. Swanson, assistant director for science libraries at the University of Chicago.
See The World Through  
The Eyes Of The Missionary

Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions on Microfilm

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was involved in activities extending from the Americas to India, Asia, Africa, the Near East, and the Pacific Islands.

Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, filmed from the archive at Harvard University's Houghton Library, represents one of the most significant manuscript collections of primary source material on missionary life, with hundreds of volumes of correspondence, reports, journals, and hand-drawn maps.

Students and researchers will find a wealth of information pertinent to the study of anthropology, political science, religion, education, women's studies, and American studies. Now available in its entirety, Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has been an ongoing project of Research Publications since 1981.

The collection consists of letters to domestic correspondents, letters to foreign correspondents, and letters from missionaries to Africa, Borneo, Siam, Singapore, China, Japan, India, Ceylon, Mandura, the Near East, the American Continents, and the Islands of the Pacific.

The complete collection contains 858 reels and is priced at $30,400. Prices slightly higher outside U.S. and Canada.

To place your order, call or write:

12 Lunar Drive/Drawer AB
Woodbridge, CT 06525
(203) 397-2600
TWX: 710-465-6345
FAX: 203-397-3893

Outside North and South America:
P.O. Box 45
Reading, RG1 8HF
England
TEL: 0734-583247
TELEX: 848336 NADL G

research publications®
FREE VOICES IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE, 1950s–1980s: A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE
“Russica” Bibliography Series, #4

by Bosiljka Stevanovic
Supervising Librarian
Donnell Foreign Language Library
New York Public Library

and Vladimir Wertsman
Senior Librarian
Donnell Foreign Language Library
New York Public Library

A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE TO THE LIVES AND WORKS OF 800 “NON-OFFICIAL” CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN WRITERS.

The particular circumstances of Soviet political and cultural life have produced some of the greatest writers of our time. A number of them, like the Nobel Prize winners Boris Pasternak, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and Andrei Sakharov, have reached the pinnacles of international recognition. Others, because their work is suppressed and destroyed in their native country, have struggled and worked in relative obscurity in the Soviet Union or as exiles abroad.

The present guide is intended to provide scholars, teachers, students and librarians with a practical and complete reference tool for the study of these free Russian fiction writers, political writers, essayists, poets, historians, and critics, from the literary giants to the little-known “samizdat” underground authors.

For the first time, detailed information about the rich culture of free Russian contemporary literature is available to the non-specialist and scholar alike in an easily accessible form.

This basic and comprehensive work is an indispensible part of any general reference collection, as well as a necessary tool for the specialist.

Ca. 500 pages
LCCC #84-61344
Pre-publication price - $62.50 (cloth)
ISBN: 0-89830-090-8

The book is scheduled to appear in February, 1986. The pre-publication price will be honored for prepaid orders.

RUSSICA BOOK & ART SHOP, INC.
799 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003 (212) 473-7480

OFFERING EACH AND EVERY TITLE IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE PUBLISHED OUTSIDE OF THE SOVIET UNION.

All Titles Available in Quantity.

Special Services for Building Public and Academic Library Collections.

CATALOGUES SENT ON REQUEST.
Molecular Structure and Energetics
edited by J.F. Leibman, University of Maryland / Baltimore County, and A. Greenberg, New Jersey Institute of Technology

VCH is proud to introduce this exciting new series, providing a unique assimilation of theory and experiment related to molecular structure and energetics. Each informative volume encompasses a general theme, enhanced by the contributions of leading authorities, as in the case of Volume 1 which features selected essays by H. A. Bent, J. K. Burdett, and Nobel Prize recipient Linus Pauling.

now available...

Volume 1: Chemical Bonding Models.
1986. Hardcover. 400 Pages. $69.00 (tent.). ISBN 0-89573-139-8

Volume 3: Studies of Organic Molecules.

Ullmann’s Encyclopedia of Industrial Chemistry
Fifth Edition in English

First introduced in December, 1984, the premiere volume of Ullmann’s Fifth edition was met with unprecedented acclaim as exemplified in the following review excerpt from Polymer News:

“...no respectable library can do without Ullmann. It is certainly a very valuable, and very often, a most indispensable asset to any library.”

With the publication of alphabetically ordered volumes one through four, offering the most international overview of chemical and industrial processes and products, now complete, Ullmann’s is ready to commence publication of the Basic Knowledge volumes.

Structured according to subjects including Chemical Engineering Fundamentals and Analytical Methods, the Basic Knowledge Volumes promise to enhance further the utility of this heralded exposition.

Average Individual Price $170.00.
Average Subscription Price $145.00.

Inorganic Reactions and Methods
edited by J.J. Zuckerman, University of Oklahoma

Possibly the most extensive survey of Inorganic Chemistry to date, this eighteen volume series will examine not only laboratory techniques and methods, but will also explore the entire synthetic arsenal available to inorganic chemists.

soon to be published...


Method of Enzymatic Analysis
edited by H.U. Bergmeyer

Currently in it’s third edition, this internationally accepted standard of enzyme analysis research has been expanded from ten to twelve volumes in order to accommodate recent scientific breakthroughs. Volumes one through nine of this best-selling treatise are now available, with the remaining three volumes slated for publication later this year.

Average Individual Price $118.00.
Average Subscription Price $102.00.