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Biblio-Glossary

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19th century, a man by the name of Swan Sonnenschein, I think it's called *The Best Books*. This guy was a kind of polymath of the late 19th century, a bookseller in London, who did some publishing. He had developed a classification system for books that I found terribly, terribly useful in putting together this list of subject descriptors. Subject headings were the first big cut in the approval program: What subjects do you want, what subjects don't you want? All the other descriptors then work on that base, all the other kinds of modifiers fine-tune the subject descriptors.

There was another book, done in the early part of the 20th century, by Bliss, on the principles of the organization of knowledge, upon which I depended heavily. One of the great intellectual tools is the classification of things, and this guy had developed a very good theory of classification which I used. This book proved to be very useful.

ATG: This was for the philosophy of classification.

RA: Yes, that's right. The underlying principles that govern classification, however you do it.

ATG: So then you sat down with these broad categories and were able to say here's how other subjects fit in, and you used the Library of Congress Classification as, perhaps a checkpoint.

RA: Right, but if Swan Sonnenschein departed radically from Library of Congress, I would tend to bias toward the way Library of Congress had done things because most of our libraries were using the LC Classification system, and it would therefore be more comfortable for them than if we used the wide departure of Swan Sonnenschein, who most of them didn't even know about.

The approval plan system was radically revised in the early '70s. I undertook it because we were getting complaints from librarians that an approval program that they had known, for example, in the San Francisco office, was not working the same as one, let us say, run by the Blackwood, New Jersey office, or the Atlanta, Georgia office. It was clear that in order to deal with this problem, we were going to have to radically modify and make more specific and more particular large aspects of the approval program.

ATG: So that you had a more systematic or more similar treatment in each office.

RA: Yes, I thought that by developing greater specificity throughout in the way in which we defined books in the system, we could deal with this problem of consistency. Ultimately we fundamentally moved all the decision-making back to the Portland office. From an internal operating point of view, we would, in the case of the first system, make up all the forms and send them to the various offices. As you know, the approval plan has always had a books/forms alternative. So we would make up a complete run of forms for every library for every book that went through the system each week. The manager of the San Francisco office, or the Los Angeles office, or the Denver office, would then go through all his new books, saying, "OK, I'm going to send this book to this library, but for this one, I'm just going to send the form." The theory was, of course, that the managers who had gone into the library and done their profiling, that is, sat with the library staff to define what books it is they wanted and what books they didn't want, knew best.

We were finding these real disparities in the plans which were causing

our libraries real problems because the approval plan was not the same thing from one place to the next. We were able, with the next revision, to move selection back to Portland thanks to the computer. By this time we had acquired a 360/50 computer and we'd become very clever about how to program it. We had a staff of something like 25 programmers and systems analysts who had truly learned to tame the computer for these purposes. So, for example, by the time the company went down the tubes we had about five million catalog records in MARC form, we had records for I don't know how many years of approval programs, lists of books for undergraduate libraries. We had all kinds of massive databases.

ATG: So that by having one person do the profiling of the book and by having more consistency in the profiling of the libraries you found that the predictability improved?

RA: The predictability from one office to the next became virtually certain.

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Bodian's Biblio-Glossary

by **Nat Bodian** (Publishing Consultant)

1. Biblioclast: One who mutilates or destroys books
2. Bibliogenist: A producer or publisher of books
3. Bibliographer: One who writes about books
4. Biblioklept: One who steals books
5. Bibliokleptomaniac: One with an obsessive impulse to steal books
6. Bibliolater: One with extreme devotion to, concern about, or dependence on books
7. Bibliomania: A passion for collecting books
8. Bibliomaniac: One with an exaggerated liking for acquiring and owning books
9. Bibliopegist: A bookbinder
10. Bibliophage: One who devours books; an ardent reader or bookworm
11. Bibliophile: A lover of books or book collector
12. Bibliophobe: One who fears books
13. Bibliopole / Bibliopolist: A bookseller; sometimes a rare book or second-hand book dealer
14. Bibliotaph: One who hides or hoards books
15. Bibliothec: A librarian