

# Dr. Ingetraut Dahlberg Oral history information

A brief video oral history with Dr. Dahlberg was conducted by her nephew, Gerhard Romen, in July, 2012 (location not specified) via a cell phone video recording. It is currently located at:

<http://youtu.be/NtT5V9e4AsY>

The following information was supplied by Dr. Dahlberg on July 6, 2012 and consists of her answers to some standard questions being used for some European IS leaders.

## ASIS&T Interview Questions

answered by Dr. Ingetraut Dahlberg, Germany

### 1. How did you become interested in information science?

Actually since early childhood. I became interested in Documentation (which is the root of Information Science). When I was ten, my father gave me a camera for Christmas, I documented whatever seemed important for me.

### 2. What were the most significant steps in your career?

In 1959, after marriage and raising of a son I looked for a job and found one at the *Gmelin Institute* (which is busy with the description of all inorganic chemicals). Prof. *Erich Pietsch*, its director, had just returned from a visit of the United States and had started an *Atome Energy Documentation Center* for which he apparently needed someone like me. And that's how everything began, since in 1962/63 I could participate in a course on Scientific Documentation which Prof. Pietsch - foreseeing the growing need of documentalists - had just established at his Institute. And in 1963, at a conference of the *German Documentation Society*, I met Prof. *Ray Pepinsky*, who in 1964 invited me for a year to work in his *Crystallographic Data Center* at the newly founded *Florida Atlantic University*, Boca Raton. I got there with my little son and worked there for 3 months, until NASA would discontinue support and I was taken over as a Research Associate by the library of that University directed by *Ed Heiliger* which was the first one in the States to have a computer (IBM 1460) at its disposal! In collaboration with *Jean Perreault* we developed a system to take care of relationships between descriptors or UDC numbers representing titles of documents. After this extremely interesting year, which allowed me also to attend in October 1964 the Philadelphia ADI-Conference (where I became a member of ADI) I decided to end it up by making a round trip through the States travelling with my VW and my Wolfgang-son. He wanted to see Disneyland and the many caves and important sights whereas I wanted to visit the major documentation centers and see people like *Don Swanson*, *Phyllis Richmond*, *Calvin Mooers*, *Pauline Atherton*, a.o.. We started on June 28 from Florida via Texas to Los Angeles and San Francisco, and back via Yellowstone Park, Salt Lake City, Mt. Rushmore, Chicago,

Toledo, Cleveland, Albany, Boston, New York, and ended up in Line Lexington, where we left our car with dear *Claire Schultz*, and got back by plane from Philadelphia on August 11, the 10<sup>th</sup> birthday of Wolfgang. Further significant steps will be answered in further questions.

### **3. What in your opinion did you contribute to the field?**

My interest in philosophy helped me to find a new understanding of the concept (see my article in the FID/CR Proc. Vol. of Bombay 1975 on The theory of concepts) and on that basis the development of a new universal classification system, the Information Coding Classification (ICC) which is a theory-based faceted system of subject fields, for which I had laid the foundations in my dissertation of 1973. It was presented for the first time 1977 in Bangalore, India, and was well accepted there (see my *Ontical Structures and Universal Classification*, Bangalore: Sarada Ranganathan Endowment 1978) Other contributions will follow.

### **4. Can you tell us of colleagues who were most influential in your work?**

Here I have (1) to thank Prof. *Erich Pietsch* for his support at the Gmelin Institute (see above), (2) Prof. *Eugen Wüster*, Vienna for his basic work in terminology; (3) Prof. *Helmut Arntz*, Bonn, (President of FID and the German Documentation Society (DGD), for his help regarding the invitation of Prof. *Ray Pepinsky* to work as Research Associate in Boca Raton, Fla. in 1964-65, also for providing me with the position of heading the DGD Library and Documentation Center, Frankfurt, in 1965, also for the possibility to create a Thesaurus Research Committee within the DGD (1965), and for a number of other quite interesting activities in our field to which he delegated me; (4) Prof. *Alwin Diemer*, Düsseldorf, who offered me to work at his university towards a PhD and gave me the theme (The universal classification system, its ontological, science-theoretical and information-science foundations), (5) Prof. *A. Neelameghan*, Bangalore, India, for his invitation to the FID Bombay Conference, 1975 and the Bangalore Ranganathan Endowment Lectures in 1977, (6) once more Profs. *Wüster*, *Diemer*, *Neelameghan* and *Perreault* to start with me the journal *International Classification* in 1974, (7) Mr., *Rasmus Mølgaard-Hansen*, Copenhagen. who made me his successor in chairing the FID-Committee on Classification Research, (8) Prof. *Fred Riggs*, Honolulu, HI, who invited me into his COCTA Committee for Social Science Terminology and to support its activities at the Unesco and for several conferences in Hungaria, Germany and Venezuela, (9) Dr. *Robert Fugmann*, Frankfurt-Höchst, who helped me to create the German Classification Society in 1977 and the International Society for Knowledge Organization in 1989. And there are many more dear colleagues, in USA, England, France, Russia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, India, Brazil, Japan who helped with invitations, for which I am most grateful.

### **5. What do you consider as the most significant achievement of information science?**

First of all the creation of thesauri, even faceted ones and their later

standardization. Then the development of computerized information retrieval beginning in 1964. The acknowledgement of necessary relationships in phrasing statements about contents of documents (links and roles, EJC-Thesaurus and similar work at Case Western), Work toward mapping and compatibility of indexing languages, today called interoperability. The ambition toward creating ontologies of non-scientific concepts. The attempt to create a Semantic Web and all the present work in this regard of linking data.

#### **6. What has been ASIS&T role in this and in your own works?**

The ASIS conferences and committee activities, as much as I was able to attend and participate in them (1964, Philadelphia, 1965, Washington, 1974, Atlanta, Ga, 199? Columbus, Ohio, 1995 Washington) as well as its journal and newsletter kept me informed about what my colleagues in the States were interested in and were actively working. This supported my contacts with some of them.

#### **7. What do you see as the main challenge and opportunities for information science?**

To envisage and work toward a world-wide cooperation for the realization of a truly helpful Semantic Web.

#### **8. What would you say in order for young people to get excited about a possible career in information science?**

Information science presupposes the existence of knowledge in a more or less organized way. Therefore it is necessary to acquire such knowledge and learn about all possible pieces and circumstances, such as sources, systems, methods and techniques, people and institutions active, in order to create for oneself a basis for any information activity and for a possible service to mankind.