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A project of Volunteers in Asia

How to Build Up a Simple Multidimensional
Documentation System on Appropriate Technology

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How to build up a simple-multidimensional documentation system on Appropriate Tecrinology

by Urs Heierii

St.Gall, December 1982

Now to run a simple **multi** - dimensional **Documentation System**
on Appropriate Technology

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1. Introduction

A documentation should never be a goal by its own; it should
be regarded as a tool to have easy access to information. A
documentation **system** should therefore be appropriate according
to the specific needs of an institution. The work to build Up
and **maintain** a documentation should, if ever possible, be mini-
mised.

Every documentation should be a good selection of documents
according to the needs of the users. A collection of 50 good
titles can be more useful than 10'000 unselected documents.
But selection is not easy at all: a document that seems to
be of absolutely no use at the moment, can be very important
tomorrow .

The **ideal documentation** would therefore consist of a selected
basic library and, at the same time, provide access to further
documents on request. Such **further documents** or information
can be sourcebooks (bibliographies, publications-lists, news-
letters, **SATIS-directories)** or a directory of institutions,
experts, libraries to be contacted if the documents cannot
answer to all questions. It is mainly **this aspect** that leads
to my proposal to set up an integrated multi-dimensional docu-
mentation system.

Of course, the system presented below is not the only possible
one; there exist many other useful documentation systems.

2. A one-dimensional documentation system

The simplest system consists just of presenting the documents
in different book-shelves, grouped into subjects.
The system can be run by several classification methods
(you can either use an own, SATIS- or any classification).

Example:

Generalities	Health	Ecology	Energy	Solar Energy
Agriculture	Food	Industry	Building	Reference works

This system is of course so simple, that it seems unnecessary
to describe it. But there are nevertheless some problems
which should be seen clearly:

- the main advantage of this system is that it can be run
  with the least possible input in labour and is easy acces-
  sible for the reader.

- the main disadvantage is its one-dimensionality:
  . you cannot put one book or review dealing with several
     subjects in more than one place, unless you copy it se-
     veral times.
  . retrieval is limited to one criteria (in this case sub-
     jects). A document for instance on a wood-stove in Upper
     Volta can be refound under energy (wood-stoves) but not
     in a country-file.

3. A simple multi-dimensional documentation with card-catalogues

3.1 Basic principles

- The documents are put into book-shelves, fiies, boxes etc. according tc size, dimensions, editor, country or other ordering criteria., Thesimplest and iu the long run most useful Ordering criteria is the size, dimension or presentation of the documents (one shelve with books, one shelve with papers, newspaper clippings in folders, one shelve with reviews etc.).
  The book-shelves serve for retrieval of documents but not for retrieval of information, which is the task of one or several card catalogues.

- Useful card catalogues are:
  . a subject catalogue grouped into topics according to a classification (your own, SATE-classification or any other classification).
  . a country catalogue or area catalogue (geographic criteria)
  . an authors' catalogue in alphabetical order
  . an address catalogue for institutions, experts, publishers etc.'
  . a position catalogue ordering the cards by the documents' current number (accession number)

- The size and depth of these catalogues depend on the needs of the users:
  e.g.: a country catalogue may not be used in the moment or should not include all countries, but for instance the countries of West-Africa and subdivided into regions.
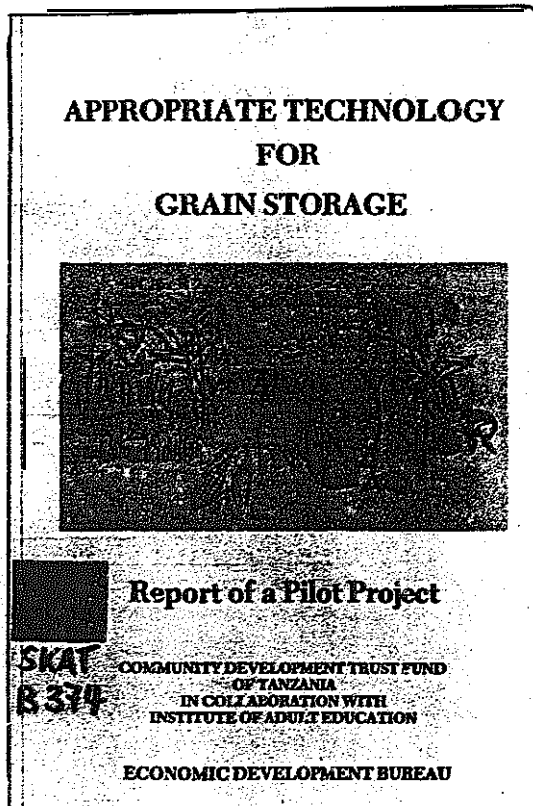 But the system should allow to expand and introduce other countries/regions later on.

- The card catalogue should allow the access to the documents of the basic library, but also to further information, if the documents don't answer to a question. Therefore the catalogue should also include reference works, adresses of. institutions, experts, libraries etc. or give access to then.

3.2 How to classify and process documents and institutions

(Examples based on SKAT's procedure and the SATIS classification)

a) example for a document

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY
FOR
GRAIN STORAGE

Report of a Pilot Project

SKAT
B374
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND
OF TANZANIA
IN COLLABORATION WITH
INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

This publication deals with:

- on-farm storage genera:
  (438 = SATIS classification code)
- silos
  (5421= SATIS classification code)
- in the specific country Tanzania
  (Tanzania = country catalogue)

Title-page of the document

SKAT would process this document as follows:

- At first the document must get an access number to find it again on the book-shelve. It gets the number B(= book) 374 (= current number; the next new document gets number 375 etc.)
- Bibliographic datas, SATIS-Codes, an abstract and keywords are written on the SATIS-card, which is part of the SKAT-card. The SKAT-card allows to give further information for the internal use, e.g. indication of t h e card-distribution.

This publication can
be found on the **book-**
shelve (it is the
374th **book** on the shelve)

SATIS-card printed on SKAT-cards
(size A5)

```
Sachgebiet  o  Getreidelagerung

    o    cod: 438,5421
        owner SKAT B 374
            title Appropriate technology for grain storage in Tanzanian
                villages. Report of a pilot project, 1977.

        author Grain Storage Project Team
    published Economic Development Bureau, 234 Colony Road, New Haven,
            Connecticut 06511
    periodical __
        series __                       date 1977      price ...
    publ.no __                    pages 94    ills. 14       refs 33
        language English                    also in  --
    abstract:

        This report describes a project for improving small scale grain
        storage at village level. The goal of the project was to de-
        velop, in the course of discussion meetings with villagers,
    keywords improved designs and strategies of grain storages, appropiate
        to local conditions and to begin implementing these improve-
        ments.
        grain storage/improvements/village level/Tanzania
```

SKAT

Verteiler:

SATIS,438,5421.33,Tanza-
nia,Auth,Stao

Bemerkungen:

distribution of the
cards:

- 1 for SATIS secretari
- 2 for subject catalog
- 1 for country cat.310g
- 1 for authors'catalog
- 1 fcr position-catalo

⟶ six cards must be
duplicated (SKAT
multiplies them
with a photostatic
machine).

b) example for an institution

As said before the card-catalogue **should** as well give further
information in addition to the documents in your **own** library.
Cards for institutions and contact-persons are very useful.

contact address	satis-codes	
Asian Institute of Technology P.O. Box 2754 Bangkok	100/103 countries Thailand file-nr. K 140 date (begin-end)	**SKAT**
Tel.: Tlx.:5168 311 105		
description of activities		
Research Institute with the following specialised research centres: ENSIC - Environmental Sanitation Information Center RERIC - Renewable Energy Resources Information Center IFIC - International Ferrocement Information Center **keywords of activities**		
remarks		Verteiler 100,103,Alph,Thai- land

In the file-nr. K 140
(K = catalogues, publi
cations lists etc.)
you find information
on the Institute.

distribution of the cards:

- 2 for subject catalogue (100 = technology general,
  descriptions of organisations

  103 = appropriate technology,
  incl. A.T. organisations and
  projects)

- 1 for address   catalogue (**Alph**)

- 1 for country catalogue (**Thailand**)

--> four cards must be duplicated

4. <u>A simple way to run a multi-dimensional documentation
system without SATIS-cards</u>

If you don't want to write detailed cards for each do-
cument, you could enter the documents on index cards.
Each record needs an own access number which you write
on subject and/or country cards.

For our example 'Appropriate technology for grain sto-
rage in Tanzanian villages" (access No B 374) it would
look like this:

Index card (subjects)   Index card (country)

These cards are then put in the subject and in the
country catalogue.