CATALOGUING OF PERIODICAL CONFERENCES: A NEW APPROACH

Examines the rules for cataloguing serial conference proceedings in two codes, Anglo-American Cataloging Rules and the Classified Catalogue Code (Ranganathan). Points out that these rules are not adequate. Suggests new rules for a set of entries which will completely meet all approaches to such a publication.

Book production pattern has undergone a vital change in the recent years. The emphasis has been more on the joint publications; the personal authorship is relegated to a secondary position with the result the number of the Corporate Authorship publications has significantly increased.

One of the most important forms of the Corporate Authorship publications that has recently gained popularity is Conference Proceedings. In this field too, the Periodical Conferences which were smaller in number previously are taking place with greater frequency now. Need, therefore, arises to have a fresh look at the treatment given to these in the existing catalogue codes and devise a pattern that does more justice to such publications as well as to the readers interested in them.

Ranganathan's Classified Catalogue Code, ed 5., which attempts to enumerate to the smallest details the rules for the cataloguing of various types of publications cannot be said to have given the same care to the Serial Conferences. The Conference Proceedings are treated under Corporate Bodies in Chapter No. JE. The Serial Conferences are treated under Chapter No. PB, Rule No. 123. The treatment given here is on the analogy of other Periodical Publications which, of course, have complexities of their own. The comparative less attention given to the treatment of Serial Conferences could have been justified in the past, when their number was small. But now, due to considerable increase in such publications, definitely there is demand for better understanding of this relatively less explored field.

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The Anglo-American Cataloging Rules represents a considerable improvement over the hitherto existing foreign catalogue codes. It has attempted to devote greater attention to this problem. The main rule dealing with the Conference Proceedings is enumerated under the general Rule 87. The subsequent rules are also devoted to their treatment. The Rule No. 87 states:

Enter a conference, congress, or other meeting under its name, followed in many instances by one or more of the following elements: number, place, date. ...

This rule further states that the Heading for a projected conference should be on the analogy of those really held, but at the end of the Heading should be added the words 'Projected but not held.' The subsidiary rules are given under 2A, 3, 6A, for the treatment of conferences lacking name; footnote 3 of the Rule No. 63B deals with the treatment of unnamed diplomatic conferences.

No explicit attention is given to the treatment of the Serial Conferences. The Rule No. 6 and its divisions (A-B) deal with the treatment of Serials such as periodicals, monographic series or serially published, directory or yearbook etc. The Rule No. 6B2 states:

Enter any other serials issued by or under the authority of a corporate body under the body.

The second example given under this states:

Title page
Proceedings of the Liverpool Geological Society
Main entry under the society
The Serial Conferences appear to be partially covered by this rule also. Information is also found under the Rule No. 89 which states:

If a conference is one of a series of numbered conferences of the same name, follow its name by the abbreviation of the ordinal number in English...

Thus attempts are made to accommodate the Serial Conferences, but not all the aspects have been dealt with clearly, therefore, the treatment of the Serial Conferences remains inadequate even here.

What I opt to suggest in the following analysis is based on my practical experience in the Cataloguing, the Acquisition and the Reference Sections; the difficulties that arose in the processing of these publications and the solutions possibly conceived that helped us to give them more useful treatment satisfying almost all the varying approaches.

The analysis given below is attempted to be within the framework of the Classified Catalogue Code. The major point of break I venture to suggest from the C.C.C. is that the Serial Conferences should not be catalogued like other periodical publications, but rather like Multivolumed Publications. These may not exactly fit into the existing definition of Multivolumed Sets, but for all practical purposes possess characteristics which demand detailed treatment and get sorted out well if treated so. For the terminology sake, we can devise some separate terms like 'Psuedo-Multivolumed Publications.'

An example of a Serial Conference is given below which will bring out the various aspects requiring our specification. The same example is used in the subsequent analysis:

The title page reads (for the 1st conference)

"A Symposium ed by Rolf K. M. Landshoff on Magnetohydrodynamics."

In the preface of the volume it is stated that the book contains papers and discussions of the Lockheed Symposium on Magnetohydrodynamics which was held at Palo Alto in 1956.

The title page reads (for the 2nd conference)


The preface note states that the present volume is the second to grow out of the Lockheed symposium on Magnetohydrodynamics, held at Palo Alto in 1957.

The title page reads (for the 4th conference)

"Plasma Acceleration ed by Sidney W Kash."

The preface says it is the 4th Lockheed Symposium on Magnetohydrodynamics held at Palo Alto Laboratory in 1959 and the papers and discussions are recorded in the proceedings.

Thus, by going through the prefaces of the subsequent symposia, we gather it is a case of a serial conference on Magnetohydrodynamics; conference proceedings are brought out under different names and are edited by the same or different persons.

The aspects that require explicit mention, therefore, are:

(a) Name of the conference to be chosen as Heading;

(b) Specific name of each conference, its number, year and place where held;

(c) Editors of the conference proceedings; and

(d) Cross references from the variant names of the conference to the name chosen as Heading of the Main Entry.

It is essential to remember here, that the conference proceedings of the type mentioned above are often requisitioned in major libraries for purchase under the name of the editor, without any mention of it being a part of a serial conference. The readers also enquire for these conferences by the specific name of a particular conference. In such cases if no co-relation is shown between the different parts of a conference appearing under separate names, there arises the danger of duplicating these publications. If no additional
entries are prepared under the editors and the specific titles of each conference, some of the most potent elements of approach will be left without a mention in the catalogue.

Before the proposed entry pattern is arrived at, an important decision needs to be taken about the wording of the name of the Serial Conferences, which in fact is relevant to the stray conferences as well. The A.A.C.R. does provide certain instructions for choosing the name of the conference under its General Rule No. 87, and rule nos. 88, 90B and 17 A1, but it does not provide for a uniform rule for choosing the Heading for the conference proceedings. No emphasis is placed on uniformising the rules for choosing the exact name of the conference in the C.C.C. also, with the result that conference proceedings may be entered under the words: Conference on, Conference of, international Conference on, Symposium on, or under the Specific Name of the conference, depending upon the layout of the book. Doing so we may be satisfying the 'Canons of Ascertainingability, but the 'Canons of Sought Heading' and 'Prepotency' are badly neglected here. A usual solution devised out is to prepare cross references from the other possible approaches to the name of the conference chosen as the Heading of the Main Entry, but the result is utter confusion to the reader. At one instance (where Heading of Main Entry is made under the specific words) the library catalogue directs the reader:

Example 1
CONFERENCE ON POWER SYSTEMS
COMPUTATION
See
POWER SYSTEMS COMPUTATION

At other places where the 'Canons of Ascertainingability' justifies the Main Entry under the words 'Conference on,' the catalogue directs the reader to refer from the Specific Name of the conference to the Heading of the Main Entry starting with the word conference on:

Example 2
TEACHING OF ENGINEERING
DESIGN CONFERENCE
See
CONFERENCE ON ENGINEERING
DESIGN (Scarborough) (1964).

Not having understanding of the "Canons" justifying the library catalogue, the reader is apt to conclude that the library keeps creating confusion for him.

An appropriate solution or a way out of this difficulty was given at the Documentation Research and Training Centre (Bangalore), Annual Seminar of 1970 in the 'Canon of Recall-Value. [1] In simpler terms, I would suggest that the Heading of the Main Entry for conferences serial or stray should be made under the Specific Words used in describing their names and a few cross reference index entries from such words as 'International Conference on' Symposium on', 'Congress on', etc. referring to the Heading of the Main Entry, should be made.

Coming to the proposed entry pattern for the Serial Conferences and taking the example given earlier, the Main Entry should be under the specific words used in describing the name of the conference.

Example 3
Main Entry

Call No.

MAGNETOHYDRODYNAMICS,
LOCKHEED SYMPOSIUM ON -.
Proceedings.
2nd Plasma in a magnetic field (Palo Alto) (1957). Ed by K. M. Landshoff

At other places where the 'Canons of Ascertainingability' justifies the Main Entry under the words "Conference on," the catalogue directs the reader to refer from the Specific Name of the conference to the Heading of the Main Entry starting with the word conference on:

Example 4

1. Author Entry
MAGNETOHYDRODYNAMICS,
LOCKHEED SYMPOSIUM ON .-
Proceedings.
1st 1956
2nd 1957
4th 1959

Ann Lib Sci Doc
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The C.C.C. treating the serial conferences like other periodical publications makes provision for this entry as an index to the classified part (where the Main Entries are filed according to the call numbers).

2. Title Analytical Entries:

Example 5

MAGNETOHYDRODYNAMICS (Palo Alto) (1956).
Magnetohydrodynamics, Lockheed Symposium on -.
Proceedings.
1st. Call No.

Example 6

PLASMA IN A MAGNETIC FIELD (Palo Alto) (1957).
Magnetohydrodynamics, Lockheed Symposium on -.
Proceedings.
2nd. Call No.

Example 7

Magnetohydrodynamics, Lockheed Symposium on -.
Proceedings.
4th. Call No.

Example 9

KASH (Sidney W), Ed.
Magnetohydrodynamics, Lockheed Symposium on -.
Proceedings.
4th. Call No.

The advantages mentioned above can be claimed for this entry as well.

Cross Reference Index Entry

Example 10

SYMPOSIUM ON-
See
NEXT SIGNIFICANT WORD e.g.
MAGNETOHYDRODYNAMICS,
LOCKHEED SYMPOSIUM ON.

Example 11

CONFERENCE ON-
See
NEXT SIGNIFICANT WORD e.g.
ELECTRICAL INTERFERENCE IN INSTRUMENTATION, CONFERENCE ON (London)(1970).

This entry is somewhat similar to the 'Generic Name Entry' suggested in the Rule No. L F1 in the CCC. The rule reads "Corresponding to a Book Index Entry or a Class Index Entry with the name of an Institute or a Conference as the Heading, there is to be a Generic Name Entry using as Heading the appropriate Generic Terms such as 'Conference, Laboratory... Zoological Gardens.' The entry suggested above (Examples 10-11) is more explicit in the referred to portion and provides better guidance. It will become far more easier to attain uniformity in rendering the Names of the Serial Conferences, if reliance is put on the 'Canon of Recall-Value' in choosing their Headings and sufficient 'Cross Reference Index Entries', as enumerated above, are made to cover up other variant terms used in describing their name.

Even in the case of a Serial Conference whose proceedings are published as 'Advances' on a specific subject under a generic name, entry pattern should be like one suggested above.
Example 12

Call No.

ADVANCES IN machine tool design and research.

Acc No.

The Book Index Entries derived from the Main Entry can also be prepared on the pattern as shown in the foregoing examples.

The advantages achieved by such a treatment of the serial conferences are many:

1. Howsoever diverse may be the information relating to Serial Conferences, it is logically consolidated in the Main Entry.

2. The different approaches of the readers are fully satisfied by the Book Index Entries prepared from the Main Entry.

3. Unnecessary duplication of these publications at the time of new purchases will be eliminated if checking is done from the catalogue prior to the placement of the orders.

4. The 'Law of Parsimony' also has its sway due to the following:
   
   (a) The Heading of the Main Entry is chosen according to a uniform practice under the specific words;
   
   (b) Few Cross Reference Index Entries from the other variant words used in the name of the conference or symposium are made once for all;
   
   (c) The information about the other aspects such as the specific name, the editors of the conference is also consolidated in the existing Book Index Entries. New Book Index Entries are prepared only when these aspects differ.

Thus, in my view, making a departure from the traditional mode of treatment of the Serial Conference is evidently desirable in view of the foregoing analysis. The gain are particularly larger to the libraries whose collection of the Serial Conferences is also large.

Reference