



UNIVERSITÉ  
DE LORRAINE



## **14<sup>th</sup> ISKO-France International Conference "Knowledge Organization and the Challenges of Diversity"**

Jointly organized by the French Chapter of ISKO and the

Center for Research on Mediations (CREM)

Conference Venue: University of Lorraine, Metz

October 13-14, 2025

Every classification act reveals a particular worldview and is embedded within a specific social and political context. Far from being a mere technical exercise, the organization of knowledge entails ethical, political, and social stakes, requiring a thorough examination of the models, tools, and systems that control the processes by which knowledge is generated, categorized, disseminated, and applied in diverse environments. The 14<sup>th</sup> ISKO France International Conference will explore knowledge organization through the lens of “diversity” and “inclusion”. Diversity refers to the variety of individuals within a society who differ from one another based on characteristics such as age, physical appearance, cultural or geographical origin, gender, or sexual orientation. Inclusion, which has been at the core of so many public policies over the past decade, seeks to implement cross-cutting initiatives that integrate all forms of diversity beyond mere juxtaposition, within a broader framework of anti-discrimination efforts (Durand & Lecombe, 2023). Classification and knowledge organization systems are evolving under the influence of these policies, as well as through the impact of profane, experiential, and activist knowledge developed by social groups—sometimes marginalized or stigmatized—or by engaged citizens seeking to challenge the monopoly of cultural industries and academic institutions in charge of disseminating information and knowledge. This expert authority questioning follows in the lineage of broader movements questioning institutional legitimacy, initiated in the 1960s and later extended in the 1980s by patient advocacy groups (e.g., individuals affected by HIV/AIDS), who emerged as experts on their own conditions, capable of engaging in dialogue with medical professionals and asserting their voices in public debates (Bonneuil & Joly, 2013). The democratization of internet access, coupled with the emergence of social media in the early 2000s, has facilitated the rise of amateur contributions (Flichy, 2010) and the development of “citizen science”, a concept rooted in the work of Alan Irwin (1995). Citizen science aims to make research more democratic and interdisciplinary by enabling individuals from the general public to collaborate on scientific

projects and by developing mechanisms that enhance access to academic discourse and knowledge at all levels of the society (open science).

Expected proposals may fit into one or more of the thematic themes identified below, but not limited to, or presenting an original perspective related to the conference topic.

## **Theme 1. Social Epistemology in Knowledge Organization**

Building upon the 13<sup>th</sup> ISKO France Conference, the first theme will explore the contribution of social epistemology to knowledge organization. Social epistemology is defined as “an analysis of the social dimension of knowledge” (Conein, 2007). In the 1950s, Margaret Egan and Jesse Shera (1952) introduced this epistemology into the fields of Library and Information Science to show that the organization of knowledge should not be reduced to the mere use of tools and techniques, but considered as a theoretical and methodological field for studying the ways in which a society establishes a relationship in order to understand its environment. This epistemological perspective is present in various fields within the social sciences and humanities (SSH), such as ethno-science, which examines popular knowledge and classifications (Bromberger, 1986), or the contemporary analysis of the relationship between lay and scientific knowledge (Barthélémy, 2005). For Egan and Shera, social epistemology must be nourished by interdisciplinarity. This opens the path for new approaches in knowledge organization: domain analysis (Hjørland, Albrechtsen, 1995), the theory of paradigms (Kuhn, 1962), as well as feminist (Haraway, 1988) and postcolonial epistemologies (Spivak, 1994). All of these approaches discard the idea of knowledge as “neutral” and “universal” and show that knowledge is a socially and historically situated production. Just like knowledge production and organization are influenced by social and epistemological structures that must be uncovered (Hjørland, 2002), as demonstrated by Hope Olson (2002) in her critical analysis of bibliographic classification systems. This theme will focus on:

- The contribution of interdisciplinary and critical approaches, such as feminist or postcolonial epistemologies;
- The theoretical and methodological frameworks for analyzing the integration of diverse forms of knowledge in knowledge organization;
- The tension between the precision of documentary languages aimed at facilitating information retrieval and the inclusivity they must strive for in order to represent the diversity of human experiences and knowledge.

## **Theme 2. Inclusive Libraries**

Public, academic, and school libraries play a crucial role in promoting inclusion and diversity by providing collections that meet the informational needs of all their audiences (children, adolescents, adults), socially isolated individuals or those with disabilities, minority or stigmatized groups. For example, in an effort to promote inclusion, the Openbare Bibliotheek in Amsterdam hosts a collection dedicated to homosexuality and sexual diversity, primarily managed by the IHLIA LGBT Heritage organization (Hubert, 2021). Since 1997, this organization has also developed the “homosaurus”, an international thesaurus that complements other controlled vocabularies, such as the Library of Congress subject headings. According to Cait McKinney (2020), such initiatives are

examples of “information activism”, which reshapes existing classification norms to prevent cataloging and indexing errors that might lead to the invisibility of certain documents. The implementation of an inclusive approach involves not only the development of specialized collections but also the evolution of classification systems and documentary languages. Rethinking access to documents through catalogs, indexing, and shelving practices is crucial for a better address of the diversity of cultural, sexual, and gender minorities (Beyron-Whittaker, 2018). The choice of distinguishing criteria, the creation of categories, and the order in which they are presented inevitably favor a particular perspective, while rendering other equally legitimate approaches or logics invisible. This can lead to misinterpretations and encourage discrimination through the categorization of entities or individuals into specific groups (Bowker, Star, 1999; Mustafa El Hadi, Timimi, 2021).

Based on the above-mentioned points, this second theme seeks to address the following questions:

- What evolutions have documentary languages undergone in recent years to better account for diversity, cultural, sexual and gender minorities, as well as users with disabilities (such as visual impairments, deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals), and allophone populations?
- How is the hybridization between the situated or activist knowledge of individuals affected by discrimination, and the information-documentary knowledge in librarians or archivists essential for improving classification and knowledge organization systems?
- What participatory actions can be implemented within a library's policy to take into consideration all users? How can such approaches foster the emergence of inclusive professional practices?
- What adaptations and technical solutions can be offered to enhance the inclusion of “excluded” audiences in sensitive political contexts?

### **Theme 3. Folksonomies, from Social Indexing to Social Movements**

This practice, which emerged in the 2000s, is based on the production of keywords such as tags and hashtags, enabling *producers* (Bruns, 2008) to organize and more easily retrieve their content, while also allowing them to quickly display themes to their audience, for example, through a tag cloud on the homepage of their website. Content indexing by users produces metadata and contributes to a process of “re-documentarization” of the web (Pédauque, 2006). It can be compared to the process of indexing performed by documentalists and librarians because, like them, it facilitates the circulation and access to content and documents. However, it differs in that it is embedded in natural language and does not use a standardized documentary language, such as a thesaurus or an ontology. Users therefore freely choose their keywords and express their subjectivity, which can sometimes hinder the efficient circulation of content and generate ambiguities (Le Deuff, 2012; Stassin, 2022). Despite these limitations, folksonomies provide social science research with a means of accessing individuals' representations, complementing qualitative observations and interviews. Rooted in daily life and lived experiences, they reveal what is significant to the individuals involved (Charvolin, La Branche, 2024). Furthermore, while hashtags are used to better index and locate content, they are also used to express opinions or advocate for causes. They become invitations to speak out in solidarity or to testify about violence and discrimination faced (e.g., #MeToo or #BlackLivesMatter).

This third theme aims to highlight the evolution of folksonomies over the past two decades and to explore the transformations they have initiated in the practices of knowledge organization and the circulation of information:

- How have folksonomies contributed to the evolution of classification practices in libraries and other cultural institutions? Do they play a role in the creation of new documentary languages?
- Can folksonomy practices related to lived experiences (activism, illness, etc.) contribute to better integrating lay knowledge into the development and organization of new knowledge?
- What potential do tags and hashtags offer in the construction, capitalization, and circulation of knowledge? How can they support the development of participatory research projects?
- How can the study of folksonomies serve as a method for investigating and observing social movements and protest practices?

#### **Theme 4. Mode 2 and the Diversity of Knowledge: Open Science, Science with and for Society, Interdisciplinarity**

The development of open science (OS) is redefining practices related to the production, sharing, and valorization of knowledge, moving away from traditional models of restricted access and limited dissemination. This approach emphasizes transparency and the reuse of scientific resources, fostering the creation of knowledge commons based on collective governance and outside purely market-driven logics (Fabre, 2017; Le Crosnier, 2011). In this context, the organization of knowledge, essential for structuring and making open resources intelligible, fits within a dynamic driven by learning organization models (Senge, 1990). These models, in open science, encourage a re-evaluation of interactions between actors and information systems, to create an environment conducive to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. Meanwhile, participatory approaches, driven by the principles of science with and for society, enrich these efforts by integrating knowledge derived from individual and collective experiences into research processes, thereby contributing to rethinking the management and sharing of knowledge. The open science challenge is part of a broader transformation in knowledge production, often described as the shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2. Mode 2 knowledge production, as conceptualized by Michael Gibbons and colleagues (Gibbons et al., 1994), refers to a type of knowledge characterized by its application context, interdisciplinarity, and collective production. Unlike Mode 1, which focuses on disciplinary research primarily conducted in academic institutions, Mode 2 favors an open and interactive dynamic where knowledge is co-constructed by various actors: researchers, practitioners, businesses, and public or private institutions. With its grounding in practical contexts and its transdisciplinary nature, Mode 2 deeply challenges knowledge organization dynamics by questioning traditional structures of knowledge classification, which have historically been based on compartmentalized disciplinary logics (Laursen, O'Rourke, 2019). In this context, knowledge organization must not only integrate mechanisms that facilitate cross-perspective collaboration but also ensure increased accessibility and transparency for all participants in the co-construction process. All of these elements raise new questions regarding knowledge organization, which will be central to this theme:

- What are the standards, documentary languages, or methodological tools that can be used to structure knowledge within an open science framework?
- How can feedback and lessons from past experiences be integrated into knowledge organization systems to improve and enrich them, while ensuring the protection of sensitive data and maintaining scientific rigor?
- What roles do sociotechnical devices based on emerging technologies (AI, blockchain, etc.) play, and what is their impact on the structuring, sharing, and ensuring the reliability of open knowledge?
- How can knowledge organization be structured to foster interdisciplinary collaboration in Mode 2 research projects?
- What lessons can be learned from the evolution of practices 30 years after the publication of the seminal work by Gibbons and colleagues?

### **Keynote Speakers:**

- Olivier Le Deuff, MICA, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France
- José Augusto Guimarães, São Paulo State University, Brazil

### **Submission Guidelines:**

Proposals should be submitted in the form of a 1500-word abstract, specifying the author's name, email address, and the thematic track in which the proposal fits.

Abstracts should be submitted at: [colloque2025@isko-france.asso.fr](mailto:colloque2025@isko-france.asso.fr)

### **Deadlines & Schedule :**

- Call for papers launch: February 4, 2025
- Submission deadline: April 1, 2025
- Notification of acceptance: May 15, 2025
- Final paper submission deadline: July 15, 2025
- Registration period: June 15 – September 25, 2025
- Conference dates: October 13–14, 2025

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