

2010-2-10 Notes

LIS 620: Information Sources and Services

Dictionaries

- General (Unabridged) 300k-500k words
 - *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, Unabridged (1963). Updated by 12k words
 - Supplemented with 2 volumes that make up the new 12k
 - 1934 was the previous whole version
 - A lot of the words in there were out of date by 1740
 - Tried to have the names of all the fish, stars, etc
 - Nowadays our type of "bells and whistles" is multimedia
 - *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (1987)
 - Updated more frequently
 - More extras like sample foreign language dictionaries in the middle of them
 - Constitution
- What we look for
 - How was it put together
 - Does it follow the order
- General—Abridged ("Desk")
 - *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (2001)
 - *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2002)
 - Etymological
 - *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989
 - A dictionary founded on scientific principal to see if a word is really English or not
 - Labels like "obscene, vulgar, etc"
- Look up *The Meaning of Everything* by Simon Winchester
 - This guy tried to find the definition of every word based on how it was used in literature
 - This guy's work became the Oxford Dictionary
- Other Etymological Dictionaries
 - *Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles* (1938-40) ("Craigie")
 - *Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical Principles* ("Matthews")
 - See what the same word means in different parts of the country
 - Language moves as people migrate in mass numbers

- *Dictionary of American Regional English* (D.A.R.E.)
- ---anthropological approach
- “You can lead a whore to culture but you can’t make her think.”
- Other ways to “Type” Dictionaries—usage
 - How words are used
 - Descriptive—these three don’t censor themselves
 - An inventory of the language as written and spoken
 - OED
 - W3
 - DARE
 - Prescriptive
 - They tell you if something is proper, vulgar, business, etc
 - Some degree of observance of “rules,” and “labels,” such as *slang*, *vulgar*, etc.
 - AH
 - Webster’s New World
- [“No communists or cocksuckers.”](#)
- Other Dictionaries
 - Order of definition:
 - Generally from known to unknown, and from general to specific
 - Word sense order
 - Historical (OED, W3, WNW)
 - Frequency of use (RH)
 - No fixed order (AH—“central meaning” first?)
- WNW = Webster’s New World
- OED= Oxford English Dictionary
- Problems
 - Specialist language needs specialists dictionary:
 - “Oh, yeah, it’s a got a fuel-injection engine and manual overdrive, but it’s not NASCAR quality.”
 - He was going to catalog the whole collection by Dewey, then went to LC, and finally settled on either UDC or a variation of Ranganatham.
 - UDC= Universal decimal classification
 - This works is an Ur-text presaging the post-colonial mindset of a few feminists with hegemonic intentions on the Academy.
 - Non-lexical terms—how to handle?
 - Proper names, when to stop?
 - Sports stars?
 - Rock star of the year/month/week, etc?
 - Current media megastars?
 - Fauna, flora, stars, minerals, etc

- Timeliness; brand names?
 - Ex: Jello, plexiglass, deep-freeze, Band-Aid
 - Do we put TM behind on it?
 - We use brand names and apply them to all objects regardless whether it's official or not
- Other Problems: Regional Pronunciations and Ethnicisms
 - "In my face, girl, that honkey! Can we talk, girlfriend?"
 - Ex: Old Blues songs you cannot decipher without a dictionary
 - Slang terms
 - "Five miles past God and hee-haw."
- We have dictionaries all over the library for different subjects.
- "Washington speech" –the hideous language that comes from Washington, D.C. as people try to trip each other up with the most confusing language they can possibly manage.
- Education keeps changing terms and names to try avoid being evaluated.
- Fun sources for word freaks
 - Expressions
 - *Words and Phrases*
 - *American Speech (journal)*
 - *Dialect Notes (journal)*
 - *Notes & Queries (journal)*
 - Very strange publication
 - *American Notes & Queries (journal)*
 - *William Safire—"On Language" (Washington-Post)*
 - *Verbatim (journal)*
- For Literary Allusions and Miscellanea
 - *Brewer's Dictionary or Phrases and Fable*
 - Lists all sorts of weird phrases and how they're used and where
 - Ex: "Golden Age"
 - *An Exaltation of Larks*
 - If you wanna know what you call a group of animals/people/etc
 - Ex: "a murder of crows"
 - *From Bedlam to Brouhaha*
 - About the obscurities of words where it came from
 - Partridge's *Dictionary of Clichés* and his *Dictionary of Slang*
 - Funk's *Heavens to Betsy and Other Curious Sayings; A Hog on Ice, Horse Feathers; Thereby Hangs a Tale*
 - Can get these from a catalog
 - Most reference libraries have these books
- Usage and Presentation
 - *Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926; updates inadequate until *Burchfield's* 3rd ed. 1996)

- He goes on for pages about things that offend him. ☺
 - *The St. Martin's Handbook*
 - *The Elements of Style*
- Is this proper English?
 - What do you mean by that?
 - Whose rules are you going by?
 - Most days it's people applying for jobs.
 - Business language
- The Rule of Etiquette is to make people feel more comfortable.

Biography

- Usually subdivided by alive/dead, by country, or by profession.
- Biographical Sources
 - Scope
 - Nationality (geographical)
 - Living or dead (historical)
 - Other criteria for inclusion (subject)
 - Type of Source
 - Directory-type
 - Survey
 - Information supplied by biographee
 - *Who's Who* (is Britain unless it's *Who's Who in America*)
 - Essay, authoritative
 - Scholarly
 - Independent sources of information
 - Mixed (current biography, cauthors)
 - Independent *and* supplied by person
- *Current Biography* is very important!
 - For news-worthy people, not celebrities
 - They keep a folder for people and once it gets a certain thickness, they print it
 - Sometimes the only source about obscure facts
 - Collect surveys, new items, do editing on surveys
- If a person has EVER been published in an independent book, they'll be in *Contemporary Biography*
- Who do we consider significant at the time shows the mindset of the world at the time
 - The Civil Rights Movement changed everything
 - Sexism, sexual orientation, religion, country of origin were all targets of discrimination
- Analyzing the Scope of Biographical Sources
 - Universal
 - All countries, all eras, doesn't include people still living
 - Webster's

- U.S. Living and Dead
 - *Who's Who in America*
 - *Who was Who in America*
 - *American National Biography*
- British
 - *Oxford National Biography*
 - *Who's Who*
- Profession: Living and Dead
- The problem of selection
 - Criteria 13 in *Who's Who*—others by “significant achievement”
 - Gov't, high-ranked university administrators, heads of professional organization, corporate presidents
 - Significant achievement
 - Selected members of honorary associations
 - Religious leaders
 - Recipients of major national and international awards
 - Vanity directories
 - Ex: 4H's directory!
 - *The National Encyclopedia of America Biographies*
 - Cartoonists, country club owners,
 - Useful for cities
 - City directory for genealogy
 - Old phone directories
- The problem of facts
 - Dates of birth
 - Dates of death
 - Different calendars who aren't on Julian calendar
 - Names vs. Pseudonyms
 - Hyphenated
 - Make up a new name when they marry
 - Mashing names together
 - Marriages
 - Not made public
 - Suppressed
 - Controversial facts
 - Ex: Was Napoleon poisoned?
 - Strange names
 - Joshua Bust The Buttons Off Jonah's Britches Hooray Williams
 - Patience Matilda Love Divine Williams
- There are all kinds of oppressed minorities
 - Women in abusive marriages