Facets as Discourse in Knowledge Organization: A Case Study in LISTA

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Knowledge Organization Systems (KOSs) use arrays of related concepts to capture the ontological content of a domain; hierarchical structures are typical of such systems. Some KOSs also employ sets of cross-conceptual descriptors that express different dimensions within a domain—facets. The recent increase in the prominence of facets and faceted systems has had major impact on the intension of the KO domain and this is visible in the domain's literature. An interesting question is how the discourse surrounding facets in KO and in related domains such as information science might vary. The present paper reports one case study in an ongoing research project to investigate the discourse of facets in KO. In this particular case, the formal current research literature represented by inclusion in the "Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts, Full Text" (LISTA) database is analyzed to discover aspects of the research front and its ongoing discourse concerning facets. Results show thinking concerning information retrieval and the semantic web resides alongside implementation of faceted searching and the growth of faceted thesauri. Faceted classification remains important to the discourse, but the use of facet analysis is linked directly to applied aspects of information science.