

CHAPTER IV



USERS' VIEWPOINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter is focused on the users' viewpoints and suggestions made towards both off-line and on-line print-outs. Conclusions of the users' viewpoints and suggestions are presented at the end of the chapter.

A. Users' Viewpoints

This part concentrates on the target group selected as users, on obtaining their viewpoints; topics of evaluation; preparation of questionnaires; and presentation of the users' viewpoints and their suggestions. The idea is modelled on Lancaster's Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services (1977: 1-19).

1. Selected Group : Criteria of Selection

Professionals selected for viewing both the off-line and on-line print-outs are divided into three groups: general users, archivists and librarians, and system analysts, at the ratio of 12:12:6. Each group represents those who will benefit from this project if it is going to be put into effect in the future.

a) The General Users

Twelve general users, whose viewpoints and suggestions towards the off-line print-outs are presented in this chapter, are selected from various institutions. They are listed as follows:

Six economists, three analysts and one historian from the Bank of Thailand; one historian from the Thai Khadi Research, Thammasat University; and a researcher from the Development Document Center, National Institute of Development Administration.

It is noted that most of them are from the Bank of Thailand, since they are most likely to use this index if it becomes operative in the future. The qualifications of this group of users are:

- have high authority in his/her field of work, and
- have some experiences or be familiar with computer or at least know something about it.

b) Archivists and Librarians

This group of users are selected because they are considered as the producers of index. They are selected from among various archive institutions and libraries in Bangkok, i.e. two archivists from the National Archives; two archivists from the Archives of the Bank of Thailand; an archivist from the Archives and Library Section, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; a librarian from the Computerized National Bibliography Project, the National Library; two record officers from the Records Center, the Bank of Thailand; a librarian from the British Council Library; a librarian from the Siriraj Medical Library, Mahidol University; an information specialist from Thailand Information Center, and a librarian from the Central Library, Academic Resources Center, Chulalongkorn University. Their qualifications are the same as those of group 'a'.

c) System Analysts

This group of users consists of those with the BOT who can comment on the on-line print-outs and the on-line retrieval strategies. They are: four system analysts from the Systems Planning and Operations Office; and two system analysts from the Economic Research Department.

These users viewed 'Displaying the Possible Retrieval Strategies through the On-line System', what is appended to the four types of the off-line print-outs.

2. Topics of Evaluation

The study attempts to find out the users' viewpoints and their suggestions made on the following topics:

- Efficiency of the off-line print-outs.
- Contents of the off-line print-outs.
- Some points concerning retrieval strategies through the on-line system, using UNESCO's CDS/ISIS retrieval language.

3. Preparation of Questionnaires

The users' viewpoints and suggestions are obtained through three different sets of questionnaires specially designed for each individual group of users.

For the general users, the questionnaire contains ten questions dealing chiefly with the users' manual of the off-line print-outs, indexing method, language, bibliographic citation, and searching strategies. (See Appendix B)

Seven questions are put to the archivists and librarians along the similar line to that designed for the general users, only with slight changes. (See Appendix C)

For the system analysts, the questionnaire contains four questions focusing on retrieved searches, operational commands, and Boolean expressions. (See Appendix D)

The three sets of questionnaires were pretested and modified twice. The groups of users selected during the pretesting and modification periods were two librarians from the Library Works, Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary; and two archivists from the National Archives.

To facilitate the respondents in their answers, the questionnaires are translated into Thai and distributed to each respondents together with a copy of 'Index to 200 Archives'. The users' manual included in 'Index to 200 Archives' is also translated into Thai. The off-line and on-line output print-outs are bound together under the title 'Index to 200 Archives'. In it, the four types of the off-line outputs are called 'Printed Index', and the on-line outputs appear under 'Displaying the Possible Retrieval Strategies through the On-line System'.

4. The Users' Viewpoints and Suggestions

The users' viewpoints and suggestions are presented in three separate groups according to the groups of users as follows:

a) Those Pertaining to the General Users

Twelve general users express their viewpoints in answer to the ten questions asked.

1) To the question as to how many times they read the users' manual, six say they read it once or twice; five say two to three times and one three to four times.

2) In considering the details included in the users' manual nine say they are amply sufficient, whereas three say they are moderately sufficient.

3) In asking how they find the explanations given in the users' manual, six of them say that they are very clear, five say they are somewhat clear, and one finds them unclear.

4) Regarding the methods used in searching information on 'NATURAL RESOURCES', seven users check through the index and then refer to the abstracts; four check through the list of keywords and the index, and then refer to the abstracts. Only one checks the list of titles, list of keywords and index, and then refer to the abstracts.

5) In stating how much they can make use of the 'List of Titles' in finding the information they need, six say they can use of the whole list. The other six say they can make some use of it.

6) Asked if they find it difficult to use the 'Printed Index', three say not at all; eight, it is a bit difficult while the last one says it is very difficult.

7) Asked what they think of the binding and printing format, the first half say they are well done, while other half finds them to be of medium quality.

8) Regarding the level of their satisfaction towards words selected for the keyword entries, eight of them say they are highly satisfied. The other four say they are moderately satisfied.

9) As for their satisfaction towards the preparation of the 'Printed Index' in English language, four express a high level of satisfaction. Seven say they are moderately satisfied. One has no answer but suggests that any language is acceptable depending on the language of the archives, if they are written in English then the index should also be in English.

10) In stating whether the bibliographic citation provided are enough to serve their needs, one says it is too much; ten say it is enough, while the last says it is not.

Suggestions from this group of users are presented with some discussions on the following topics:

1) Language

Ten users suggest that it will be better to use the Thai language or add a Thai version to the 'Printed Index', and the other two suggest that archives written in either Thai or English should have their indexes prepared in that language too.

It is the author's opinion that, practically, it is better to use the Thai language in preparing the 'Printed Index' for archives which are mostly written in Thai. But for this project, it is impossible to do so, because all of the data, all archives input and output requirements, prepared for this project are processed by the UNESCO's CDS/ISIS at AIT, where only English is used as there are no computer facilities to accommodate the Thai language. It is also impossible to produce the 'Printed Index' in the same language as the one used in the archives, be it Thai or English. To do so would be too complex, take more time and cost.

2) Arrangement

Only one user suggests a slight change in the way the 'Printed Index' is arranged. That is, the index part should precede the abstract part.

3) List of Keywords

Three users express their views on this point. The first is of the opinion that it is useless to include a list of keywords in the 'Printed Index', because all of the keywords listed are the same as those which appear in the index part. The users can readily start

their searches from the index, without having to go through the list of keywords.

It is reasonable enough to say that one can prepare index by using words from titles and abstracts indexing. The more titles and abstracts of archives are included, the large number of keywords entries are to be taken into consideration.

It will be a different story however, if this list of keywords also contains the subject headings. The growth of subject headings of specific archives, as the one belonging to BOT, is very slow, but the archives are increasing rapidly. In this case, a list of keywords is necessary so that the users are informed of what subject headings are presented in the index.

In this project, a field of 'ENRICHED KEYWORD' or broad terms, or something similar to subject headings, is also designed. Enriched keyword will help the users in their searches. Due to lack of an authority list of subject headings for the subject fields covered in BOT, this field is omitted but the Field Definition Table for this field is still kept in the data base.

Two other users suggest that more explanations be added in the users' manual on the importance of the list of keywords.

4) Binding

Only one user suggests the permanent binding for the 'Printed Index'.

The 'Printed Index' distributed for viewing is bound loosely by plastic holders. If this project is successfully accepted by BOT's authorities and put into effect, then the 'Printed Index' will appear in a better condition.

5) Bibliographic Citation

There are two suggestions on this. The first is that it will be more interesting to exactly state the quantity of the archives down to the number of pages. This is not a serious problem, because the 'QUANTITY' field is provided with fifteen characters. Input to this field can be anything which indicates quantity.

The second user suggests that it not include 'LANGUAGE' in bibliographic citation if the index is to be prepared in the same language as the one used in the archives. This user is the one who comments on the language.

6) Index Entries

Only one user recommends that the index entries in the 'Printed Index' concentrate mainly on the economics and banking. Unfortunately, these entries will not be understandable to the other group of users such as historians.

Like any other subject fields, the index has its own terminology. No matter how it is written and what material it contains in a specific field, the index engages mostly the terms used and understood by those who are interested in that particular field. This proves difficult for the users who search for information in any field outside of their own background or profession.

b) Viewpoints and Suggestions of the Archivists and the Librarians

As aforementioned, users in this group are selected because they are considered to be the future producers of the index. Their viewpoints and suggestions are obtained from the questionnaires returned.

1) In stating their views towards clearness of the explanations given in the users' manual, five of them say the explanations are very clear. Five say they are moderately clear and two say modification is still needed.

Three users suggest some changes in language structure of the users' manual, i.e. wording, which will make the explanations clearer. Two point out that not enough explanations and illustrations are provided. The other two suggested that the 'Table of Contents' be prepared in both Thai and English.

2) Asked whether the arrangement of various sections in the 'Printed Index' makes the index easier to use, six say it absolutely does, whereas the other six say it does but only moderately.

Most of the suggestions made on this point concern the arrangement of the index and the abstracts part. That is, the index should precede the abstracts to make it more convenient for the users. One of them suggests that the use counts in the list of keywords be placed at each index entry in the index part to provide quick information on the number of records without counting the accession numbers.

3) As to whether the bibliographic citation provided is enough for their needs, all say yes.

4) Asked how they judge the quality of the indexing method, eleven users say it is well prepared, and one says it is moderately effective but gives no suggestion.

5) Asked how easy it is to search for needed information through the accession number, ten say it is very easy while the other two say it is moderately easy.

Some complain that the six numeric characters indicating the accession number are too long to remember.

The advantage of using these six numeric characters is that it is designed to cope with the fast growth of archives and can handle up to 999,999 titles.

6) Asked how compact the index entries are, ten say they are very compact, whereas one says they are moderately compact, and the last one has no opinion but complains that the terms in economics and banking are unfamiliar to him/her.

7) Regarding binding and printing format, ten find them to be well done while the other two are only moderately satisfied with them. They suggest that the printing be clearer, that more space among the letters be provided and that the printing format be improved.

For economic reasons, the 'Printed Index' is obtained directly from the computer print-outs, hence, the printing letters are unclear and the density of words on each line occur. The printing format can be improved with slight change in the computer programs.

c) Viewpoints and Suggestions Made by the System Analysts

This group of users actually looks at 'Displaying the Possible Retrieval Strategies through the On-line System' which are print-outs produced by the on-line searches. This part is appended to 'Index to 200 Archives'. The users focused their viewpoints strictly on what are displayed in the print-outs. Their opinions and suggestions are presented below.

1) Regarding the scope of retrieval capability through the use of Boolean expressions, two say it is highly capable, and four find the capability to be medium.

Two suggest that searches be done on various levels through the use of different sets of keywords. This will be effective if a

thesaurus is prepared along with the keywords from titles and abstracts indexing method.

Another user comments that the scope of retrieval strategies enhanced by Boolean expressions is narrow in comparison to that gained from pattern matching system, known as SNOBOL.

The last user suggests the use of 'and', 'or', and 'not' instead of the symbol '+', '*', and '^' in the retrieval strategies.

2) To the question as to how easy it is to use the retrieval commands, one says he/she can use them with maximum ease. The other five say they are moderately easy.

Two of them point out that using the field names, e.g. 'YEAR RANGE', is more convenient and easier than using 'text__', because the users need not stop to think what that certain 'Text__' refers to; they only have to remember the common names.

The other two suggest that the symbol '+' and '*' not to be used because these symbols are conventionally accepted, i.e. that '+' refers to set union and '*' refers to set intersaction.

The last user suggests that only field number be used in text searches. By not using the keywords listed, the users should be allowed to use any of their choice.

This suggestion is feasible because to do so is what we call indexing from the full text. But it needs more time, and to key the whole content of each record into the data base requires more computer space.

3) Asked how easy it is to operate the commands use to retrieve the information needed, three say it is very easy, and the other three say it is moderately easy.

Only one suggestion is made on this point, namely that accession numbers of the records be added to the display of 'Total' (T) retrieved in each search. The accession number would make it easier for the users in selecting to view any abstracts of that search in that they would not have to enter the file page by page to view each record, which is rather time consuming.

This suggestion is practical only if the collection is small, which is the case with the one created for this project. To view any record by calling the accession number only after the first step of searching through the large collection of data will waste more time, and the precision of the search will be low.

4) Asked whether they find the print-outs comprehensible, four say yes. One finds it moderately so and the last one says it is almost incomprehensible.

The suggestion made on this point is that any record retrieved from a certain search should be automatically assigned with serial number for the further reference. Another minor point is that the explanation of P=----- and T=----- should also be displayed.

B. Grading

Grading is meant to be a mean to gauge the users' level of satisfaction towards the off-line and on-line outputs. The grading scales are judged from the 'scores' assigned to each answer of a certain question in the questionnaires. The total of the scores indicates the level of satisfaction on the part of each respondent output. The level of satisfaction is divided into four categories; highly satisfied, moderately satisfied, slightly satisfied, and not at all satisfied.

1. The General Users

The scoring of the answers to the ten questions asked is as follows:

The score for answer 'a' is '3'. The score for answer 'b' is '2', and the score for the answer 'c' is '1'. If no answer is given then the score is zero. The results of grading for this group of users are presented in the table below.

Range of Scores	No. of Responses	Results
26-30	6	highly satisfied
21-25	6	moderately satisfied
16-20	-	slightly satisfied
0-15	-	not at all satisfied

Table 3 The General Users' Level of Satisfaction

Six users of this group indicate a high level of satisfaction for the 'Printed Index', whereas the other six are moderately satisfied with it.

2. The Archivists and the Librarians

The scoring of each answer to the seven questions used for this group of users is as follows:

The score for answer 'a' is '6'. The score for answer 'b' is '4', and the score for answer 'c' is '2'. If no answer is given then the score is zero. For statistical analysis purpose, the scores assigned to each answer in this questionnaire are different from the other two sets.

The results of grading for this group are presented in the table below.

Range of Scores	No. of Responses	Results
36-42	11	highly satisfied
29-35	1	moderately satisfied
22-28	-	slightly satisfied
0-21	-	not at all satisfied

Table 4 The Archivists and the Librarians' Level of Satisfaction

Eleven users in this group are highly satisfied with the 'Printed Index', while one is moderately satisfied with it.

3. The System Analysts

This group of users views 'Displaying the possible Retrieval Strategies through the On-line System'. The score for each answer to the four questions is as follows:

The score for answer 'a' is '3'. The score for answer 'b' is '2', and the score for the answer 'c' is '1'. If no answer is given then the score is zero. The results of grading for this group of users are presented in Table 5.

Range of Scores	No. of Responses	Results
11-12	1	highly satisfied
9-10	4	moderately satisfied
7-8	1	slightly satisfied
0-6	-	not at all satisfied

Table 5 The System Analysts' Level of Satisfaction

One of the users from this group register a high level of satisfaction, four a moderate level and one a low level.

From the three tables above, it can be concluded that:

- 1) the general users' level of satisfaction for the 'Printed Index' are 'high' and 'medium' at the ratio of 6:6,
- 2) the majority of the archivists and the librarians is in favour of the 'Printed Index', and
- 3) most of the system analysts are moderately satisfied with 'Displaying the Possible Retrieval Strategies through the On-line System'.