Taxonomy Project

Organization of American States

This taxonomy project is a joint effort by the Columbus Memorial Library/SHA and the Knowledge Management Area of MAPP/OAS as part of the Knowledge Management Group, Organizational Development Section/Strategic Counsel for Organizational Development & Management for Results.

A taxonomy is a classification, used as a synonym of controlled language which reflects the context and the contents produced by a specific organization, and it is usually used to develop different functions in corporative web sites to organize contents, search, and navigate.

Objective

To develop a taxonomy, or an organized structured standardized language that summarizes the main contents, terms, and concepts used and coined by the OAS that need to be used by an audience of users to accomplish other goals inside the organization.

Project Phases

Phase 1 - Context Analysis and Sources

The goal of this phase is to analyze the current situation, to make decisions on the parameters the taxonomy should accomplish and to gather information on the context, audience, and users. The purpose of this stage is to produce an inventory of minimum content for the taxonomy, derived exclusively from internal sources, official documents, and publications made during the history and management of the OAS. Based on the standard ANSI/NISO 19-2005, the team applied the following criteria:

1. The taxonomy is structured based on the four pillars of the OAS.
2. Careful selection of institutional sources under defined criteria and compiled under an online library.
3. Layout the information in multi-level structure formats, hierarchical displays or tree structure.

Phase 2 – Building of the Structure of the Taxonomy

In this phase and with respect to each pillar, three major steps will be followed: 1) identification of content, 2) selection of terms or lexicon via NVIVO software, and 3) development of the structure of relevant hierarchical and associative relationships, based on ANSI/NISO 19-2005.

Final product: The result will be a controlled vocabulary based on a conceptual structure with hierarchical display or tree structured. The taxonomy will allow the OAS to discover a conceptual structure of the terms, and grant extremely specific and appropriate terms to match other information products inside the Organization; additionally, it standardizes the language and facilitates knowledge management as a basic asset of the OAS.

So far, the sub-working group continues to collect terms and their relationships. In the next stage, the focus will be on term discussion, its relevance, synonyms, and possible additions and eliminations.