

Indexing Depth of Monographs vs. Journal Articles: a Comparative Study/ Yehuda Kimchy

Abstract

The objective of this study was to compare the indexing depth of monographs, according to subject headings, with the indexing depth of articles in journals, according to descriptors, during two periods of time: 1950 – 1981 vs. 1987 – 2001.

For the sake of comparison, 100 monographs and 100 journal articles in Hebrew as well as 100 monographs and 100 journal articles in English were chosen from each of the periods, totaling 400 publications from each period. The monographs were chosen at random from the online catalog of Bar-Ilan University's libraries system (ALEPH system), whereas the articles were selected from RAMBI INDEX (list of articles in Judaic studies) and from the Szold Database Index, a collection of articles in social sciences.

Findings: With respect to monographs, the comparison between the two periods showed a significant increase in the average number of subject headings assigned for both Hebrew and English monographs. This finding may be attributed to the computerization of the libraries over the years and to the increased consciousness and awareness of the importance of indexing for the information retrieval process.

With respect to journal articles, the average number of descriptors assigned to articles, both in Hebrew and in English, declined during the second period. This finding is quite surprising and difficult to explain especially in view of the developments described above.

In comparing languages, it was ascertained that more subject headings were assigned to monographs in Hebrew than in English during both periods, which may be attributed to a different policy of the catalogers at Bar-Ilan University. This is not the

