



## From Cataloguers to Designers: Paul Otlet, social impact and a more proactive role for knowledge organisation professionals



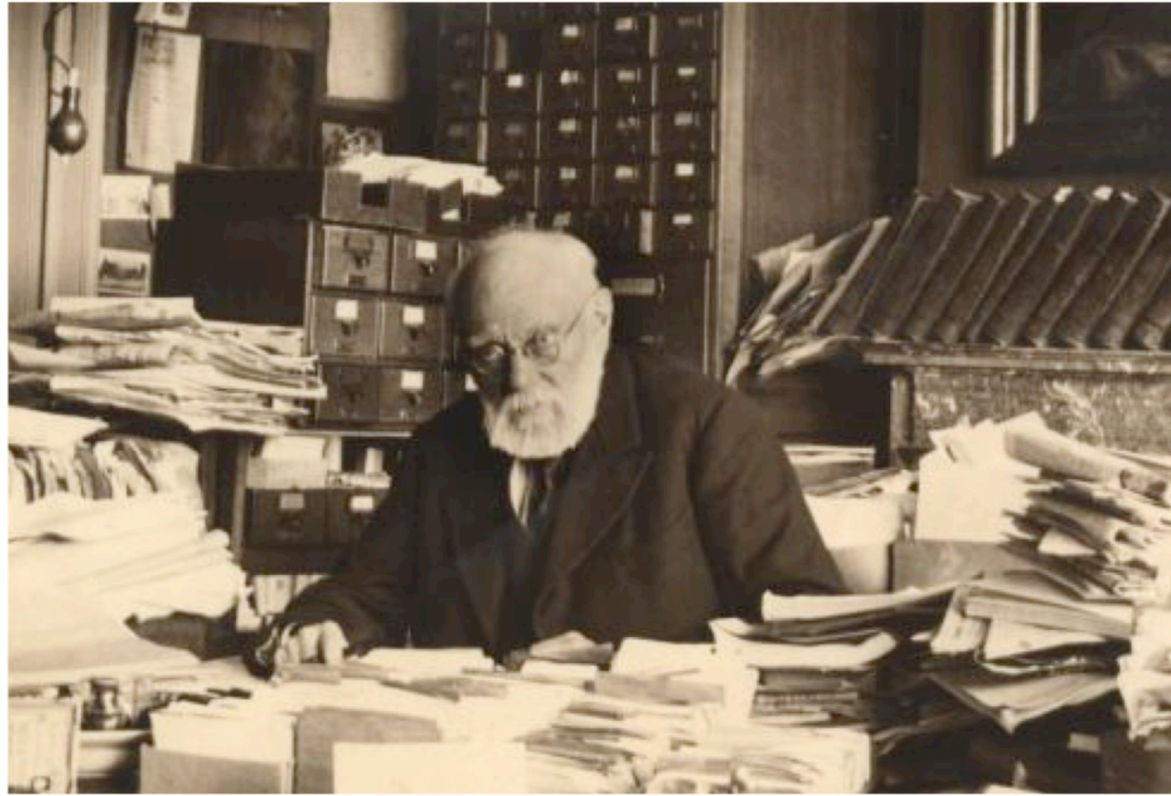
# From Cataloguers to Designers:

**Cataloguer** – a person who makes a systematic list of items (of the same type)

- *The world as it is*

**Designer** – A person who plans the look or workings of something prior to it being made, by preparing drawings or plans

- *The world as it could be*



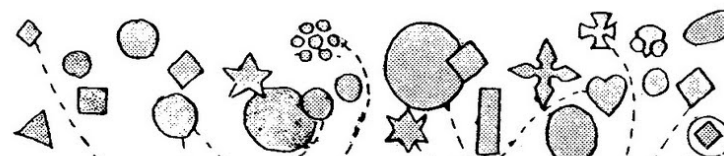
## Paul Otlet (1868-1944)

- Father of Information Science
- Creator of Universal Decimal Classification
- Originator of Universal Bibliography project
- Founder of Union of International Associations
- Influencer of League of Nations, UN and Unesco

# L' univers, l'intelligence, la science. le livre

## Les choses

*L'Univers, la Réalité, le Cosmos*



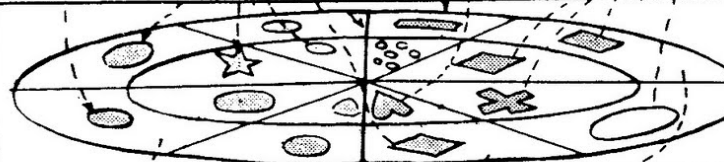
## Les intelligences

*qui pensent les choses fragmentairement*



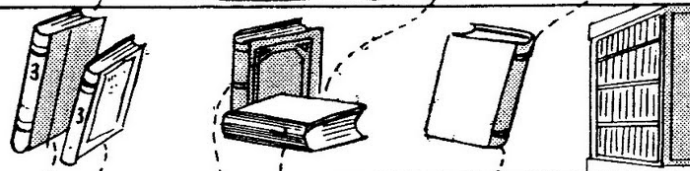
## La science

*Remet et coordonne en ses cadres les pensées de toutes les intelligences particulières*



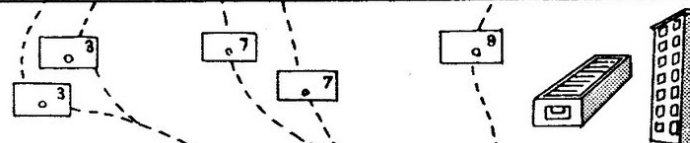
## Les Livres

*Transcrivent et photographient la science selon l'ordre divisé des connaissances*  
La Collection de livres forment la Bibliothèque



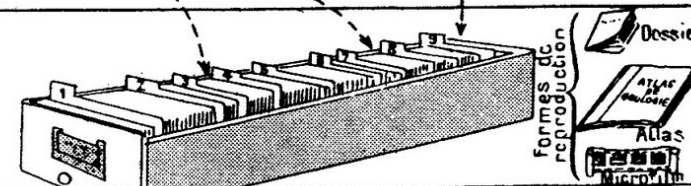
## La Bibliographie

*Inventorie et catalogue les livres*  
La réunion de notices Bibliographiques forme le répertoire Bibliographique universel



## L'Encyclopédie

(Texte et Image)  
Dossier Atlas Microfilm  
*Concentre, classe et coordonne le contenu des livres*

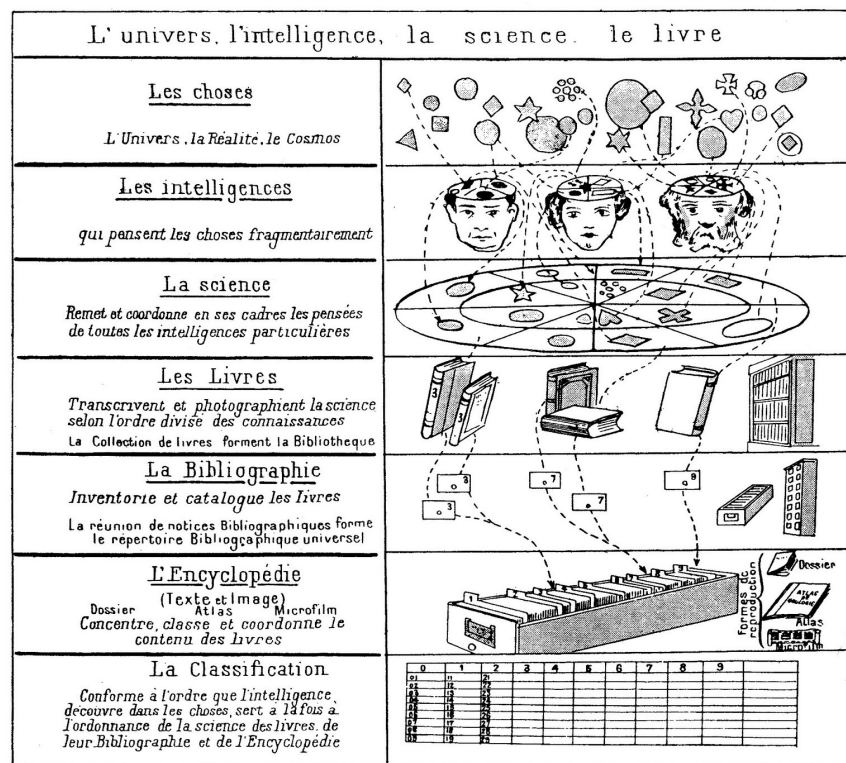


## La Classification

*Conforme à l'ordre que l'intelligence découvre dans les choses, sert à la fois à l'ordonnance de la science des livres, de leur Bibliographie et de l'Encyclopédie*

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
01		11	21							
02		12	22							
03		13	23							
04		14	24							
05		15	25							
06		16	26							
07		17	27							
08		18	28							
09		19	29							

# From Knowledge Organisation to Social Impact:



Paul Otlet, *Traité de Documentation* (1934), p.41

“What was of primary importance for the positivist philosopher was the formation of a ‘subjective synthesis’ of positive knowledge as a way of envisaging and directing the development of society”

W. Boyd Rayward *The universe of information: the work of Paul Otlet for documentation and international organisation* (1975)



## Hugo Andres Krüss (1879-1945)

- Director General of the Prussian State Library
- Founding member of IFLA 1927
- Producer of German Union Catalogue 1931
- Active in committees of the League of Nations
  
- Member of the Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce
- Supporter of Nazi book burnings 1933
- Opponent of Deutsche Freiheitsbibliothek 1934

# The Importance of an Ethical Frame:

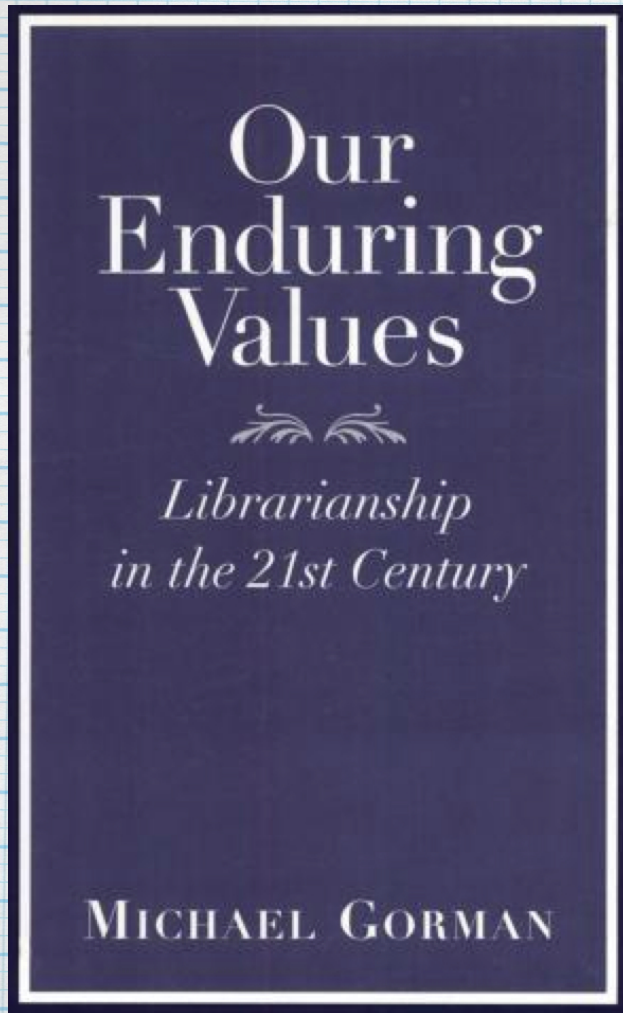


Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Leigh Star *Sorting things out: classification and its consequences* (1999)

- Robert Hauptman and the bomb-maker 1975
- Robert Dowd and how to freebase cocaine 1989
- The death of Victoria Climbié 2000
- The deportation of Vivian Alvarez 2001
- Sanford Berman and the sham of standard cataloging 2002
- Sanford Berman and offensive body odour in public libraries 2005
- “Abortion” POPLINE February 2008



# Elements of an Ethical Frame:



Michael Gorman *Our enduring values: librarianship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (2000)

- Stewardship
  - Service
  - Intellectual freedom
  - Rationalism
  - Literacy and learning
  - Equity of Access
  - Privacy
  - Democracy
- ? The common good
- ? Respect for intellectual property
- ? Avoidance of harm
- ? Creation of good
- ? Sensemaking – policy, strategy, decisions, risk, opportunity

Sequestration



*Competitive  
Oligopolies*

*Dictatorships*

Disorder



Order



*Cooperatives*

*Utopias*

Commons



## **Sequestration:**

- the act of taking legal possession of assets;
- the act of taking forcible possession of something;
- the act of separating people from other people or things.



Sequestration



*Competitive Oligopolies*

**data farmers**

**publishers**

*Dictatorships*



Disorder



**entrepreneurs**

**KO professionals**

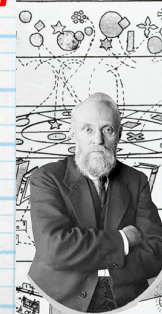


Order

**sharers**

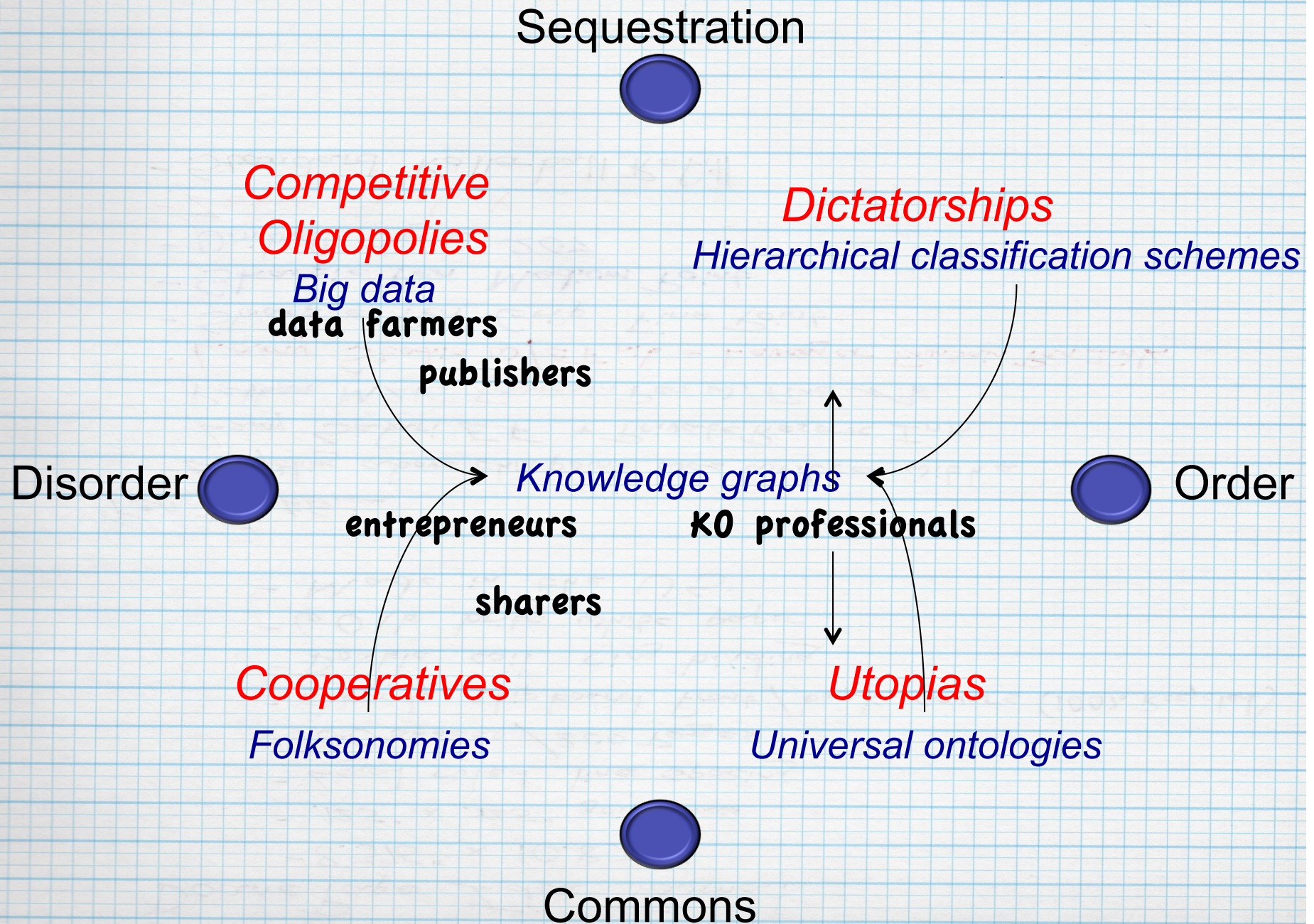
*Cooperatives*

*Utopias*



Commons





## **To Make a Difference:**

- **We need an unembarrassed ethical stance**
- **We need to recognise the wider impact of our work and make ourselves accountable for consequences arising from our work**
- **We need to move from a passive “service” stance to an activist “design” stance**
- **We need to acquire and build skills in:**
  - **Design (service, tools, apps, infrastructure)**
  - **Business analytics (purpose)**
  - **User needs analysis**
  - **Technology toolsets and capabilities**
  - **Sensemaking from diverse and large information and data sets**



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