HURIDOCS

HUMAN RIGHTS INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION SYSTEMS, INTERNATIONAL

**Human Rights Monitoring
and Documentation Series**

Volume 2

WHAT IS
DOCUMENTATION

By Manuel Guzman and Bert Verstappen

**HURIDOCS
2003**

WHAT IS DOCUMENTATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

This volume is part of the **Human Rights Monitoring and Documentation Series** produced by HURIDOCS. The Series consist of practical manuals aimed to help build the capacity of human rights organisations with regard to monitoring and documentation. There are two kinds of manuals in the Series: a "**what is**" manual provides an overview of a certain topic, and a "**how to**" manual is meant to impart specific skills.

What is Documentation aims to help human rights workers understand better the whole subject of documentation. It does not aim to discuss in detail the various tools and techniques that are used in documentation, as other books and manuals will do so. It introduces to the reader many concepts and specialised terminology in this field. It serves as a very suitable introductory reading material before moving on to various books and other materials on the subject of documentation.

The volumes in this Series are especially designed for small non-governmental human rights organisations, considering that they often have limited resources and small staff who are assigned with multiple tasks. The handy size of the manuals make them excellent reference materials. In addition, they are written in a style to facilitate learning and could serve effectively as materials for training, including individualised and self-initiated learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. WHAT IS DOCUMENTATION

Introduction

Sometime in the early 1990's, one of this manual's authors took part in a training workshop held in a country in the South and attended by representatives of local human rights organisations. It was announced as a workshop on human rights documentation. The resource person who came from an established international documentation centre proceeded to discuss library-based methods of document organisation, to the initial surprise of the participants who expected to hear inputs on investigation of human rights cases.

The experience was a pleasant eye-opener for both the resource person and the workshop participants. While original expectations were not met, the workshop turned out to be beneficial just the same as it met some other needs. One important thing that it showed was that people from various parts of the world use the term *documentation* in various ways.

This manual takes as starting point the differences in the understanding of the term by presenting two types of documentation. The aim is not to present them as opposing styles. The distinctions made may appear overstressed at times, but this is done for the sake of learning insofar as there are techniques that need to be learned which are specific for each type. At the same time, it will be shown that there are common principles that govern the running of different kinds of documentation centres. It must also be stressed that the two types of documentation as presented here complement each other in the effective performance of human rights information work. Many human rights organisations in fact combine the two types of documentation discussed in this manual.

Usage of the Term Documentation

The term **documentation** is widely applied, and has different meanings dependent on the context in which various practitioners use the term.

In some parts of the world, mention of the word "documentation" brings directly to mind a collection of documents. This meaning tends to give importance to the actual set or collection of documents held in one's possession. The term is used in this sense, for instance, when referring to a centre as having extensive documentation on a subject matter.

The use of the term **documentation centre** to refer to a centre collecting published and unpublished documents, in the way a library does, gained wide usage in the 1970's, spurred by two phenomena. The first is the so-called "documentary explosion" -- the spectacular increase in the production of documents throughout the world, a large part embodying scientific knowledge and researches on various topics. The second is the "technological explosion" -- the rapid advance in the field of information and communication technologies that dramatically increased the ability to produce, multiply, distribute and access information materials.

The period saw the emergence of many specialised centres to contend with the broad range of available documents which came in various forms such as congress proceedings, theses, reports, studies and the like. These centres employed a combination of well-established library practices and modern techniques to enable greater access to the wide variety of published and unpublished information materials.

Documentation can mean the collection of documents such as published works. . .
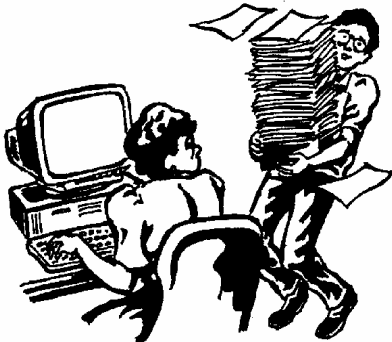
. . . or the recording of facts about ongoing or recent events.

On the other hand, in other parts of the world, the word **documentation** first brings to mind the act of recording the results of an investigation, inquiry, research or similar activity. During the process, documents are created. It is a meaning that emphasises the act of producing the document that contains the facts of the case. This usage is common among human rights NGOs tasked with the monitoring of human rights violations. This meaning is further employed in such specific terms as **legal documentation** (recording the investigation results on documents that could be used in court or for other legal purposes) and **forensic documentation** (recording the results of investigation using sophisticated scientific methods, such as examination of physical remains).

In fact, one can document any event or process. For instance, the documentation of a conference would involve the recording of the deliberations, making a list of participants, taking pictures of the sessions, and other related activities.

Documentation, in the meaning of the recording of facts and producing documents in the process, is usually very important in the case of discoveries or practices that could benefit others. Thus, we hear of the documentation of a new invention, of techniques of crop production, and of other helpful achievements all over the world.

The above discussion indicates at least two kinds of documentation, the **library-type of documentation** which involves collection of documents, and the **documentation of events**, which involves recording information about ongoing or recent events.

HURIDOCS recognises the validity of the continued use of the same term, **documentation**, for different kinds of activities. It uses the term documentation in a comprehensive manner. This is especially because many common principles govern both kinds of documentation.

Documentation Defined

Documentation is a process consisting of several activities, namely:
a. determining what information is needed and establishing means for acquiring it;
b. recording the discovered information and storing such in appropriate containers (called documents) or collecting already-existing documents containing the needed information;
c. organising the documents to make them more accessible; and
d. actually providing the documents to users who need the information.

Documentation could also mean a specific part of this process. Thus, documentation could refer to the act of recording information, or the act of collecting and organising documents.

In this manual, when referring to a specific kind of activity, terms such as **library-type of documentation** and **documentation of events** (the latter to include **investigation-related documentation**) will be used.

Some Differences

The two kinds of documentation discussed above could differ from each other in several aspects, namely:
• General purpose
• Nature of information handled
• Clientele
• Nature of the task
• Authors of documents
• Evaluation of information gathered

a) General purpose

A usual difference lies in the *general purpose* of documentation. Libraries and similar types of documentation centres are generally set up to aid in learning and research. Thus, a documentalist collects as much documents as possible on each of the various topics that comprise the specific field of knowledge covered by the centre's mandate.

On the other hand, centres that undertake **documentation of events** generally have very specific purposes. The information they collect pertains to actual events that happened on the ground, and they usually use the information in carrying out various kinds of intervention in these events. This kind of documentation is very much action-oriented.

b) Nature of information handled

The information held in libraries and similar types of documentation centres tend to be public information, although there are private libraries and documentation centres meant for select clienteles.

Organisations which document events work mainly with confidential information as it concerns actual persons whose lives may be endangered, should it turn up at the wrong hands. The information is also often very dynamic, meaning that some facts are prone to change quickly and need to be updated. The centres that investigate human rights violations normally do not publish the documents that directly result from investigation. Instead, they produce and publish reports that

are based on the unpublished documents they hold.

c) Clientele

The circle of users of library-type documentation centres tends to be wider than that of centres monitoring events. The users of library-type documentation centres can be internal users (staff and members) as well as external users with an interest in the information held by the centre. For instance, a human rights documentation centre usually makes available its collection to lawyers, policy-makers, journalists, researchers, students, other organisations or the public in general.

On the part of centres documenting human rights events, it is usually the documentors themselves, or their colleagues in the same organisation, who make use of the information collected. Often, there is also a very limited circle of other users like case lawyers, social workers and doctors who are given access to the information so that appropriate services can be rendered. The reach of information only considerably widens when the centre disseminates materials it has packaged to suit the audience, such as to other concerned groups, United Nations bodies or the public in general.

d) Nature of the task

A library-style documentation centre collects existing information materials, whether published or unpublished. The task of the documentalist involves the physical examination of an information material that is clearly definable.

In the case of documentation of events, a physical item that can be examined is often absent at first. Information is often still unorganised and exists as knowledge in the minds of persons involved in the events. The task of the documentor is to draw out the various pieces of information from those who hold them, analyse and piece them together, and produce information materials to contain the assembled information.

e) Author of documents

Another main difference lies in *who* creates the documents in question. In the **library-type of documentation**, the production of documents is generally done by others, and a major task here is getting hold of such documents. With **documentation of events**, the production of documents is a task of the person undertaking documentation.

The difference between these two kinds of activities is reflected in the two different *terms* used for the person who undertakes documentation:
- *documentalist* is the person responsible for collecting documents produced mainly by others and organising these for greater accessibility and use
- *documentor* is the person who collects data on and analyses an event, in the process producing documents that contain details of the event

f) Evaluation of information gathered

While both kinds of documentation involve an *evaluation of the information gathered*, the manner and purpose of evaluation differ. The evaluation done in the library-type of documentation is in the form of established library practices like *content description*, that is, describing the contents of the document collected, including indexing, for the purpose of storing the document properly and facilitating its retrieval.

With investigation-related documentation, evaluation of the information involves *application of rules of evidence* such as corroboration. A fact-finder/documentor usually collects information from various sources and evaluates these in order to draw conclusions on the event.

To illustrate, a fact-finder/documentor may receive conflicting testimonies regarding a case of killing, where one testimony alleges that the killing is accidental, while another alleges that it was premeditated and thus should be considered as a case of execution. The documentor should then analyse all the information contained in the conflicting testimonies, as well as additional information from other sources. In the end, the documentor must come up with a finding, consisting of a judgement as to whether the case is indeed an execution or not.

Such process of arriving at a judgement based on careful analysis of all relevant information is not required from a documentalist. In fact, a documentalist usually relies on the author's own perception as a guide in evaluating the relevant of a document to the collection and in describing the contents of a document. In the case of divergent treatment of subject matters, the documentalist does not have to form a unifying judgement. A documentalist can collect various documents on a subject matter, including those espousing conflicting views, and leave it to the user to evaluate what is most important to her/him. This is consistent with the idea of libraries as aids to learning and research.

Common Principles

As earlier mentioned, it must be stressed that there are certain documentation centres in which the two kinds of documentation are combined. For instance, there are organisations which conduct investigation and documentation of human rights violations at the same time that they collect secondary information in the form of press clippings, annual reports of other organisations and the like.

Common principles govern both kinds of documentation, especially in terms of *organising the documents* to ensure better access to information. Both kinds of documentation make use of such techniques as assigning identifiers (such as titles) and locators (such as classification notations or record numbers) to the documents, for the purpose of efficient storage and retrieval.

2. WHY DOCUMENT

General Reasons for Documentation

There are a number of reasons why documentation is important. For one, events happen and are finished in time. Or there could be some events which are useful to be informed about, but which happen elsewhere. People may also have different perceptions and analyses of events. If there is no documentation on these events, information on them may forever be gone, and the benefit that could have been derived from them is lost.
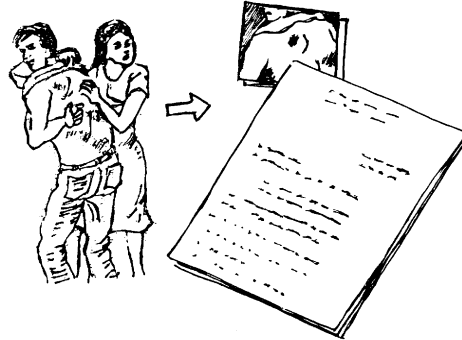
Documentation is undertaken to record the facts of an event and preserve these for future use.

In other words, documentation is an activity that is forward-looking, meant to address a future need. People who need certain information will need documents that they can refer back to. Moreover, if properly documented, information can be re-used and re-used.

Purposes of Human Rights Documentation

Human right organisations are usually set up for the following purposes:
- human rights education
- standard-setting
- direct assistance to victims
- pursuit of justice
- establishment of historical records

Information materials like human rights covenants, manuals on the United Nations system for protection of human rights, texts of domestic laws pertaining to human rights, and periodic reports of international and national human rights organisations are used extensively in *human rights education*.

The same kinds of materials are also very important in the area of *standard-setting*. At the local and national levels, the task of standard-setting can be performed by examining international human rights treaties, campaigning for their adoption at the national level, examining domestic laws, and monitoring government's compliance to its obligations.

On the other hand, organisations providing *direct assistance to victims* as well as those working for *justice*, need information about the actual events involving human rights violations. Immediate assistance include for instance, the search for a victim who was abducted, the filing of a petition for *habeas corpus* or the issuance of a denunciation that can help in preventing further violations. In these situations, a clear presentation of the facts surrounding the alleged violation will help in enabling concerned groups to provide immediate assistance. Other forms of assistance can be in terms of medical help, psycho-social therapy, financial assistance and

others.

Working for justice for victims of human rights violations means seeking relief and redress, such as the release of a person who was arbitrarily detained and the payment of compensation where possible. Human rights NGOs can undertake publicity campaigns and bear pressure on authorities to render justice to victims. On the part of perpetrators, justice is secured when they are held accountable and punished accordingly.

Human rights NGOs must strive to obtain *hard evidence* to prove that violations of human rights are taking place and to which degree. This involves both the systematic documentation of particular cases and the compilation of trends and statistics based on a larger amount of information collected and recorded over time. This information can than be used for action at the national, regional and international levels. For example, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights will only seriously consider violations committed in a particular country if its Special Rapporteurs and/or human rights NGOs can provide credible evidence that such violations are gross and systematic.

Systematic documentation that can enable groups to combine pieces of information from various sources is also crucial in bringing perpetrators to justice. For example: at the end of 1986 in Argentina, the government passed the so-called "Ley de punto final", stipulating a time limit of 60 days for the presentation of any further accusations of violations committed in previous years. After this time limit, any punitive action against those incriminated would cease, eliminating prospects for investigations on the situations of detainees and missing persons. Human rights organisations turned to the documentation system used in Buenos Aires by CELS (Centre for Legal and Social Studies). In the CELS formats, perpetrators were identified in terms of time, the incidents reported, place, roles of persons involved and official posts. The use of formats with thorough analysis greatly improved the determination of personal responsibility of suspected perpetrators.

Another thing that human rights groups can do is to build up a *memory* of violations as they occurred in the past under a repressive regime, because it is important not to forget, and repression constitutes a part of the history of a country. For example, the Russian human rights organisation Memorial compiled an overview of human rights violations committed in the Soviet Union under the Stalin regime, and human rights groups in Rwanda have documented mass killings that constituted part of the genocide in 1994.

3. WHO DOCUMENTS

Documentation is undertaken by human rights organisations working to fulfil their specific mandates, which could be any or a combination of the purposes of documentation discussed in the previous chapter. How the documentation centre or unit is set up varies from organisation to organisation, depending on the nature of services they provide.

Library-type human rights documentation centres that collect a wide range of materials from governmental, inter-governmental and local and international non-governmental sources are excellent for purposes of human rights education and standard-setting. These centres can also provide information that is useful in the conduct of information campaigns and legal actions towards relief for victims and prosecution of violators. On the other hand, organisations mandated to provide direct assistance to victims, work for justice, or work for the establishment of historical records, necessarily have to conduct investigation-related documentation.

A human rights organisation can be exclusively a documentation centre. This is possible if it is a library-type documentation centre that provides services to other human rights organisations and individuals that carry out the work of campaigning, lobbying, legal actions and other kinds of human rights tasks. This is a very rare set-up though.

The most common set-up is that a documentation centre is just one unit in a bigger organisation. An example would be an organisation that specialises on human rights education and which has a large collection of books, journals, audio-visual teaching aids, and other information materials.

Organisations that monitor human rights events are usually set up with a number of departmental units. At the heart is the documentation unit that conducts investigations and maintains records of the results. This unit then feeds information into other departments of the organisation, such as those involved in direct assistance, legal services, campaigns and publications. A documentation unit of this kind generally also maintains a library-style collection of books, press clippings and other information materials, or if not, has operational working relations with legal and human rights libraries.

The two types of documentation complement each other and are necessary in most human rights activities. For instance, in publicising the human rights situation in a country, it is necessary to include information on actual human rights cases as well as relevant international human rights norms and national legislation.

To summarise, documentation is not an end by itself. It is a function that serves specific purposes as embodied in the mandate of an organisation. For a more detailed discussion of how the function of documentation is best translated into organisational terms, see *How to Set Up a Documentation Centre*, Volume 3 in this series.

4. WHAT IS A DOCUMENT

Kinds of Documents

A **document** is a carrier or container of information. An equivalent term is **information material**, or simply **material**. A document or material can be:
1. textual or non-textual
2. published or unpublished

Textual and Non-textual documents

A document or material is **textual** if it contains mainly written words. The following are examples of textual documents: books, periodicals, statistical reports, legal documents such as affidavits, catalogues, patents, and administrative records. The information is usually printed on paper. The texts of many documents are now increasingly being stored in electronic form such as files saved in computer diskettes.

Non-textual documents may contain some text but the most important part is the information presented in some other form. Examples of non-textual documents are photographs, maps, sketches, sound recordings, video recordings, artistic works and monuments, films and slide shows.

Published and Unpublished documents

Documents may be published or not. A **published document** usually has the following characteristics:
1. made available to the public, such as by selling
2. printed and packaged in a regular form such as a book, magazine or any other form of publication
3. produced with numerous copies
4. available through established means of distribution such as bookstores and newspaper stands
5. carries a set of information such as title, name of author, name of publisher and other related information that provides a unique and accurate description of the document as a physical carrier of information. This set of information is referred to as **bibliographic description**.

Some documents may not be printed and distributed, but are made available to the public through Websites on the Internet, a process referred to as **Web publishing**.

There are numerous forms of unpublished documents, each form used for a specific purpose. For instance, an affidavit is mainly used in legal procedures. A data entry form on the other hand facilitates data retrieval and collation of statistical information. If there is more than one copy of the documents, it is mainly to safeguard against loss or destruction.

Grey literature refers to documents which, while also available to the public, do not conform fully to the above set of characteristics. For instance, only a limited number of copies may be available, and not through the usual means of distribution. Or they may not carry explicitly the names of their authors. Common examples of grey literature are conference papers, public statements and denunciations, occasional reports by human rights organisations, speeches and declarations, brochures, etc. Many of these documents are reproduced in limited quantities, such as by photocopying. Non-governmental organisations account for a large amount of grey literature,

especially in situations where they had to establish alternative information dissemination channels as their access to the mass media is limited.

5. WHERE TO GET INFORMATION

People as Sources

Sources of information can be people or documents. In the case of people, the information may be held in their minds and not yet written down, which is why information-gathering activities such as surveys and interviewing are conducted. The documents that result from these information-gathering activities are called primary documents.

In cases involving human rights violations, it is necessary to discover if the personal source has direct knowledge of the event being investigated. Sources with direct knowledge, also referred to as sources of first-hand information, are the victims, perpetrators and witnesses. The information they hold is very important in the prosecution of cases, as it is given paramount evidentiary weight compared to so-called hearsay evidence, or information relayed to somebody who was not present in the event.

Documentary Sources

The documents that contain the information as given in the language of the original source are called **primary documents**. Many of these documents are produced during or right after an information-gathering activity. Some may be artefacts that are discovered during research or investigation. They could be affidavits, transcripts of actual conversations, letters, hand-drawn maps, manuscripts or other actual original documents.

Primary documents are often found in legal organisations, highly specialised research centres, archives, museums or investigative human rights organisations. Primary documents serve as the foundation of information. These documents are often very valuable and care must be taken with their preservation. Some primary documents may be entered as evidence, so they are held in courts and not by the monitoring organisations, in which case copies or descriptions of such must be obtained.

Secondary documents refer to those produced based on primary documents. The account of a journalist published in a newspaper, or the resulting work of a researcher, is a secondary document. Books and articles are the most common example of secondary documents. They generally translate the primary documents into a form that readers can understand, present an argument or describe something from a particular viewpoint. Most library collections are composed largely of secondary documents.

Tertiary documents are those that contain information derived from primary and secondary documents and which serve to help locate them. Examples of tertiary documents are bibliographies, guides, indices, abstracts, directories, lists and catalogue records.

6. HOW TO CONDUCT DOCUMENTATION

The whole process of documentation consists of several phases, from determining what to collect and how to providing user services. The phases are similar for both library-type of documentation and investigation-related documentation, except for some additional activities in the case of the latter.

The library-type of documentation has the following phases:

DETERMINING WHAT TO COLLECT AND HOW	→	ACQUIRING MATERIALS	→	ORGANISING MATERIALS	→	PROVIDING USER SERVICES
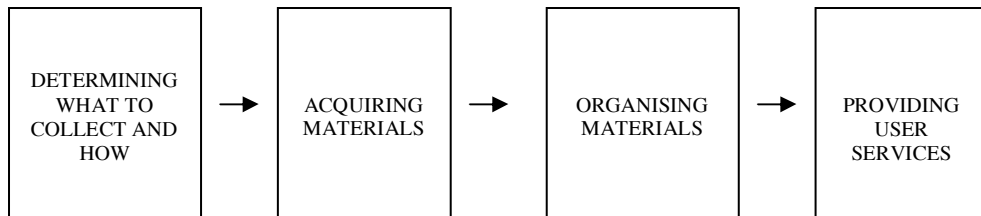
In investigation-related documentation, there is the additional element of acquiring information on the events being investigated, such as through fact-finding missions, and organising the gathered information. Below are the phases of investigation-related documentation.
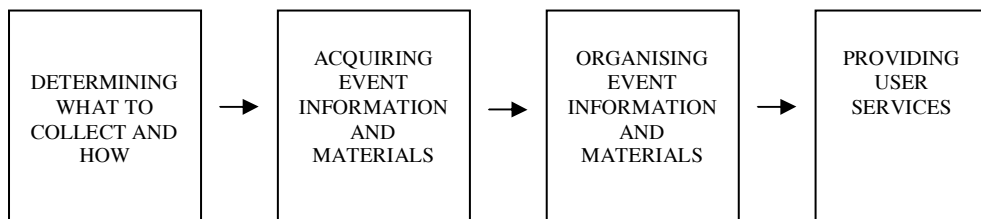
DETERMINING WHAT TO COLLECT AND HOW	→	ACQUIRING EVENT INFORMATION AND MATERIALS	→	ORGANISING EVENT INFORMATION AND MATERIALS	→	PROVIDING USER SERVICES

Aside from the difference in terms of phases, the specific techniques used in each phase also sometimes differ between the two kinds of documentation. The various phases and techniques, as well as the principles that govern them, are discussed in the next sections.

Note: In librarianship, terms such as *collection development* and *collection organisation* are used to denote the acquisition and organisation of information materials. The phases indicated above correspond to these concepts nonetheless. The authors have preferred to use more general terms because the topic of documentation as discussed in this manual goes beyond the field of librarianship, stressing that there are common principles governing different types of documentation.

7. DETERMINING WHAT TO COLLECT AND HOW

This phase involves several activities, namely:
- users' needs analysis
- determination of the possible sources of information
- selection
- deciding how to acquire the information or documents needed

User Needs

The information worker must have an idea of what the users will need, and the process of finding out is called **users' needs analysis**. It is an activity that must be done especially when a documentation centre is being set up. Afterwards, the information worker can undertake activities at timely intervals so as to update the assessment of the users' needs.

As most documentation centres are established to provide services to specific categories of clients, an examination of the mandate of the centre must be central to determining the eventual contents of the collection. Other methods are client surveys, examination of document usage statistics and keeping tract of the subject matters, titles, authors and format of materials often sought by users.

In the case of human rights events documentation, it is crucial to anticipate the needs of the immediate users of the information to be collected. For instance, immediate users are lawyers, medical officers and others who provide direct services to victims, as well as activists who need the information promptly to be able to undertake immediate actions like denunciations, appeal for urgent help, campaigns, protest actions, etc. Obviously, it is helpful to know what these users need so that the fact-finders will ensure that efforts will be made to gather the pertinent data. The users can be consulted in the design of interview schedules for instance.

Determining Possible Sources of Information

Sources of information could be people or other documents. Librarians/documentalists often trace information by consulting bibliographies, book review journals, directories of periodicals, annual reports and the like.

Documentors of events often establish mechanisms to be able to be informed about events that need to be documented, such as by maintaining a network of local informants, monitoring the news, or maintaining a "hotline" for victims. The initial information obtained from these sources, referred to as *lead information*, points the fact-finder to where investigation can start. Among the possible sources of information during investigation would be:
a. People who played roles in the event, such as victims, witnesses and perpetrators
b. Government officials such as military officers or prison officials
c. Other people who could provide background information, such as colleagues of the victim
d. The actual sites of the events
e. Government offices such as statistical offices
f. Records kept in morgues, hospitals, prisons, and other facilities

Selection

Selection is an essential activity in the area of librarianship and refers to the task of choosing the materials that the documentation centre would like to include in its collection. It involves finding out what materials are available and making choices on which ones to acquire and how. Librarians/documentalists are often aided by the officers of the centre in selecting which publication titles are most relevant for the centre's collections.

Investigation-related documentation sometimes also involves a similar process of selection. For instance, for reasons of costs, a centre may opt to collect only testimonies but not forensic evidence. In general though, the primary criterion in deciding what information and documents are relevant is the purpose formulated for the fact-finding activity. For instance, if the aim is to file a criminal case against the perpetrators, it would be necessary to collect as much testimonies and evidentiary materials as possible.

Deciding How to Acquire Information and Materials

In the case of library-type documentation, after the materials have been selected, the next step is to decide how to acquire them: by purchase, as gift or by exchange. See *How to Set Up a Documentation Centre* (Volume 3 in this series) for a more detailed discussion on the topics of sources of information, selection and acquisition of materials.

In the case of investigation-related documentation, once an organisation has decided that it should follow up on the lead information received, a fact-finding activity is usually planned. It could be in the form of a high-profile mission, or the sending of unobtrusive investigators to the site, or arranging for the informants to be met somewhere else. The next section discusses the various forms of fact-finding.

8. ACQUIRING EVENT INFORMATION

The process of gathering information so as to identify the violations in an event is called **fact-finding**. Fact-finding activities can be classified in terms of:
- location of the investigation
- number of fact-finders
- visibility of the fact-finding activity

On-site fact-finding refers to the conduct of investigation on the actual site of an alleged violation, as the site itself may yield relevant pieces of information about the event. On the other hand, **off-site** fact-finding is conducted somewhere else, such as an interview held in the office of a human rights organisation, usually for reasons of security of the informants or the fact-finders themselves.
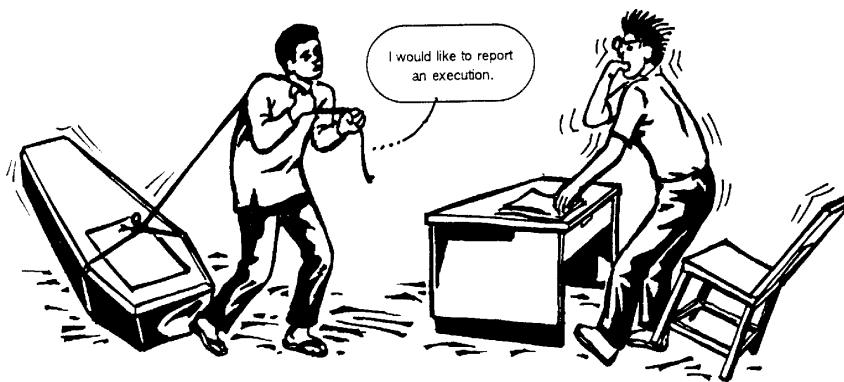
Fact-finding can be undertaken by one or a few individuals or by a large team. It can be **low-profile**, where the investigators must not attract attention as much as possible, or **high-profile**, where the authorities, the community to be visited, and/or the media are notified of the activity.

A delegation consisting of a number of individuals, usually well-known personalities in the country, if not foreign nationals, who undertake the investigation in a high-profile manner, is called a **fact-finding mission**.

The usual forms of fact-finding are:
a. interviewing
b. ocular inspection
c. process observation
d. collection of relevant documents
e. taking pictures
f. use of other recording instruments such as those for audio and video recording
g. forensic examination

Most of the forms of fact-finding enumerated above are undertaken in combination with each other. For instance, interviewing the residents of a community where a violation is alleged to have happened, undertaking ocular inspection, and taking pictures of the place often go hand-in-hand during on-site fact-finding activities.

Interviewing is the most common form of fact-finding. The transcripts of interviews are among

the basic documents that must be kept, especially as these form the basis for other documents such as a mission report.

Ocular inspection can yield proofs such as charred remains of properties, bullet marks, bloodstains, etc. These could corroborate or contradict claims by certain informants, and these should be noted properly in the fact-finder's reports. Photographs and video recordings can be of immense help in this case.

Process observation is the method often used in determining whether court trials conform to accepted legal procedures. It is also used a lot in monitoring the conduct of elections.

The *Handbook on Fact-Finding and Documentation of Human Rights Violations* (see Bibliography for details) discusses more thoroughly the various techniques of fact-finding. The *Handbook* especially contains very helpful tips such as the do's and don'ts of interviewing victims, witnesses and other people.

9. ACQUIRING MATERIALS

Librarians/documentalists can acquire documents through purchase, as gifts or by exchange, and follow certain routines and procedures to do so. These methods are discussed in detail in Volume 3 of this series: *How to Set Up a Documentation Centre*.

As for documentation of human rights events, some documents may need to be acquired in addition to those produced in the course of fact-finding. Examples of such documents are death certificates, land titles, medical certificates, legal briefs and motions, court decisions, press reports, etc.

Relevant documents may be in the hands of government authorities, which may not always be willing to provide them. For human rights organisations it is important to establish relations with relevant persons. They should also be familiar with the legislation regulating the access of public information, so that complaints to the authorities can be launched if necessary.

Some documents that can be collected are published documents that carry second-hand accounts, such as newspaper reports. As a general rule, monitoring organisations undertake their own investigation when events come to their attention, and form their own judgement based on these investigations. Secondary information is not usually treated as confirmed information but simply included among the various pieces of information for evaluation by the fact-finder. Moreover, press reports and the like are often used as leads to be followed up.

10. ORGANISING EVENT INFORMATION

Methods of Organising Information

Information can be organised in one of two general ways:
- structured information
- free text information

Structuring information involves organising information in a consistent manner. For this, standard formats are used. A **format** is an empty form on which information can be recorded. It can be on paper, or a layout on a word processor, or it can be an entry layout within a database program.

A standard format is made up of divisions of information called **fields**. When a standard format is completed, the result is a **record**.

A **database** is a collection of records, organised in such a manner as to facilitate searching for a particular record or a set of records, or for particular data contained in those records. The other main characteristic of a good database is the ability to produce varying types of outputs, in terms of contents (from minimal to comprehensive data) and in terms of how the outputs are presented.

Documents Held by a Monitoring Organisation

The phase of information organisation is mainly relevant only to investigation-related documentation. This phase involves the creation of documents as produced by the documentors.

In the case of the library-type of documentation, there are some documents that are also produced, e.g., abstracts and indices. These are however documents of a different nature, as they are used for retrieval purposes, and are discussed under the heading of *Organising the Materials*.

To understand better the process of organising information, it would help to know the various kinds of documents that a monitoring centre needs to collect, or produce, and hold. These are free text accounts, evidentiary and other primary documents, secondary documents, records in standard formats, and reports and other kinds of outputs.

FREE TEXT ACCOUNTS	EVIDENTIARY AND OTHER PRIMARY DOCUMENTS	SECONDARY DOCUMENTS	RECORDS IN STANDARD FORMATS	REPORTS AND OTHER OUTPUTS
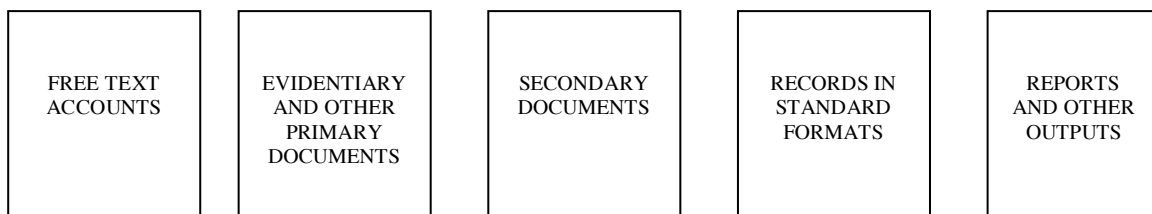
In the preparation of documents, it must be noted that a document can be a source for another type of document. For example, an affidavit can be used to produce a fact sheet and as a basis in completing a standard format, or a set of fact sheets can be used to make a statistical report.

Free Text Accounts

Documents such as testimonies and fact-finding mission reports are essential in human rights work. Most of these documents are used in legal actions. They are produced by documentors and their colleagues who put down in writing the results of interviews and other methods of investigation. They are usually written as narratives with the facts presented in a chronological manner.

Other Primary Documents

Evidentiary documents such as affidavits, medical certificates, autopsy results and the like are very essential in investigation-related documentation. The acquisition of these kinds of documents is discussed in the preceding section, *Acquiring Materials.*

Secondary Documents

The most common secondary documents collected in investigation-related documentation are press reports about events. The information contained in these reports, when verified, add to the whole mass of information for evaluation by the fact-finder in forming a judgement about alleged violations.

Standard Formats

Standard formats play a very important role in the documentation of events. They are used to contain information about the events and the people involved, as well as information that points to the actual documents about the events. Completing the standard formats serve two purposes at the same time, those of organising information and organising documents. Their completion leads to the creation of a database that facilitates data analysis, tracing of records and transfer of information.

Standard formats can carry different kinds of fields, such as fields for entering free text information (e.g., a short narrative description of an event) and fields for entering terms chosen from a micro-thesaurus which is a kind of a controlled vocabulary.

A **controlled vocabulary** is a limited set of terms used by documentation workers to represent concepts such as the characteristics of an event or the contents of a document. It will be the same set of terms that a user will use when retrieving information. The terms contained are said to be controlled when an effort is made to make them as exhaustive and as mutually exclusive as possible. One way of controlling is including preferred terms into the list while discarding other possible terms. To illustrate, the terms capital punishment and death penalty exactly mean the same thing, so only one of them must be included as a term for describing events. Otherwise, there could be problems not only in document retrieval but also in the generation of statistics.

The terms in a controlled vocabulary are often simply referred to as **terms** but they may also be called **descriptors**. Index terms are one kind of descriptors, generally understood to refer to the terms used in describing the subject matter or concepts contained in a document, while terms or descriptors could refer to those used in describing anything. For instance, a list of terms to describe marital status could be constructed as follows:

- single
- married

- widowed
- separated
- divorced
- living with common-law spouse
- with partner
- others

A **micro-thesaurus** is a short but exhaustive list of descriptors for a specific field in a standard format. The above short list is one example.

HURIDOCS has published the revised *HURIDOCS Events Standard Formats* (see Bibliography for details). The book discusses the "events" methodology that is often used for monitoring cases of direct violations such as killings and torture, and is now gradually being adapted for use with other concerns such as violence against women.

The *Events Standard Formats* contain numerous fields used for describing events, acts, persons, locations, etc. Many of these fields are completed by assigning terms or codes from HURIDOCS micro-thesauri. HURIDOCS has developed 48 micro-thesauri used in conjunction with the Events Standard Formats, among them: types of acts, kinds of methods employed, types of locations, victim characteristics, kinds of occupations, nationalities, religions, types of perpetrators, etc.

Reports

Human rights organisations also usually produce regular reports that cover a number of events, such as those that happened in a particular region or during a certain period (e.g., an annual report). The reports are often analytical, e.g., they present trends and patterns as could be determined from the collected data. The reports are usually published, and carry such bibliographic information as titles and names of authors or publishers.

When to Organise Event Information

To summarise, information organisation is done in several stages, namely:
a. immediately after the investigation of an event, so as to produce documents like testimonies and report of findings
b. after the production of the above documents and the collection of related evidentiary materials, so as to produce records in standard formats
c. after the collection of data on a sufficient number of events so as to produce general reports.

It is evident that two kinds of skills are necessary in information organisation, one in terms of report-writing, and the other in terms of working with structured information (i.e., a database). The *Handbook on Fact-Finding and Documentation* particularly discusses the various considerations to take when preparing fact-finding reports. Another useful book is *Data Analysis for Monitoring Human Rights* which provides advice on how to study human rights data and how to present statistical analyses. The book *Getting the Facts Down* discusses how to work with structured information in the area of human rights.

11. ORGANISING MATERIALS

The organisation of documents is done so as to allow their easy retrieval when needed by users. In the library-type of documentation, the two main steps in this phase are **cataloguing** and **physically storing the documents**. Cataloguing in itself contains several steps as follows:

- bibliographic description
- contents description
- assigning document locators

Cataloguing

A **catalogue** is an ordered set of references about the items in a collection. In other words, a catalogue is a list. But more than a mere list, each item in the list is a record by itself, containing several pieces of information, such as the title, the author, and a description of the contents. The catalogue can be a plain list, or a series of small secondary documents (such as index cards) arranged in a specific manner. A **card catalogue** is such a list where each entry or reference is recorded on a separate card.

A well-organised documentation centre should hold records describing all the materials in its collection. **Cataloguing** means the production of a short record about a document, and then including the resulting record in a list to be used for retrieval purposes. The short records contain sufficient information to help the users retrieve the main documents.
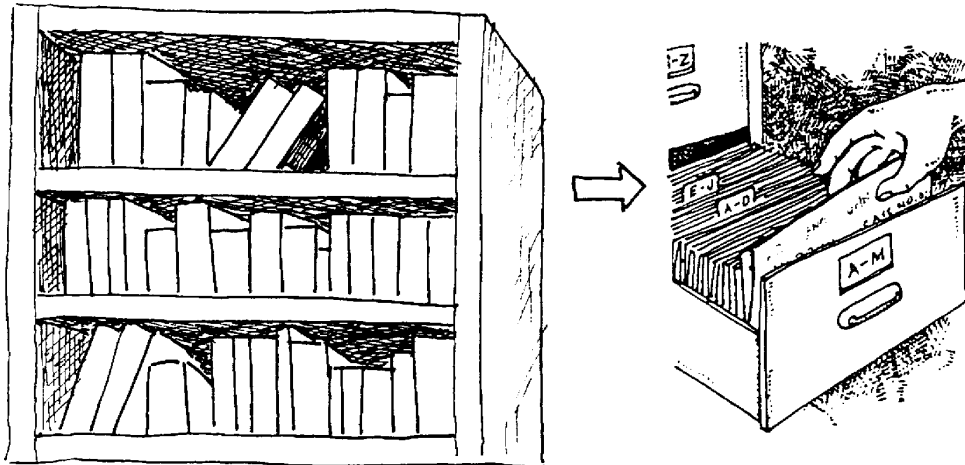
Records of what are contained in the collection, usually in the form of indices, are consulted by users to determine whether the main documents referred to are relevant to their needs.

In the past, the most common method of cataloguing has been through the production of catalogue cards. The information about each document is copied many times over on several cards, one for each access point. **Access point** refers to the heading at the top of each card, which could be the name of the author, the title, or any of the various terms used to represent the subject matter of the document. Cards with similar access points, e.g., all those containing names of authors, are grouped together and then arranged alphabetically. In this way, a user can search the cards by author, title or subject.

Another common method is presenting the catalogue as one printed volume with sections listing the entries by title, by author and by subject matter. This method has serious limitations in that a new catalogue must be printed when new materials are added to the library.

A more efficient method of cataloguing practised now involves the use of bibliographic standard formats with the aid of computers, where only one record per unit (e.g., a book, a chapter in a book or an article) is created and the computer software takes care of retrieval possibilities.

Whether as catalogue cards, as entries in a list, or as records in bibliographic standard formats, the catalogue records need to include several kinds of information. These are bibliographic description, information on the contents, and indications of the respective locations of the documents. Each kind of information is discussed in the next sections.

A set of rules, such as the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, provides guidelines on how to enter information into catalogues, including rules on the lay-out and use of punctuation, especially in the case of catalogue cards. The *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* have been adapted and simplified by HURIDOCS, and published as *HURIDOCS Standard Formats for the Recording and Exchange of Bibliographic Information concerning Human Rights* (see Bibliography for details).

Bibliographic Description

This phase involves the recording of information that describes the document as a physical carrier of information. This phase can also be referred to as recording the document's identifiers. The most basic identifiers are the title, the name of author, edition, publisher and year of publication of the document.

The *HURIDOCS Standard Formats for the Recording and Exchange of Bibliographic Information concerning Human Rights* can be consulted to determine what information to include in a bibliographic description and how.

Contents Description

The process of describing a document in terms of what it contains is called *contents description*. The two main forms of content description are *indexing* and *abstracting*. It is the indices and abstracts that a user consults to determine whether the main document is relevant to her/his information need.

Indexing refers to the process of selecting the terms that most closely represent the contents of a document. The terms that are used for this purpose are called **index terms**, but they may also be referred to as **descriptors** or **subject headings**. This is why a catalogue composed of entries with the index terms as access points is called a subject catalogue.

Usually, more than one index term is used to describe a single document. If so, the number of access points is increased, meaning that with a card catalogue, several cards need to be produced. With standard formats, the usual way is that there is an Index field, which allows entry of multiple terms.

The aim of indexing is to lead the users to the information they are looking for. The list that is used for describing the contents of the document should be the same list to be consulted when retrieving documents based on user requests.

Indexing takes place on basis of a controlled vocabulary organised as a list of index terms or a thesaurus (see page 23 for a discussion of controlled vocabulary). A **thesaurus** is a sophisticated list, consisting of a controlled set of terms linked by hierarchical and/or other kinds of relationships among terms.

The whole process of indexing has various phases. A key phase is the development of the list of index terms or thesaurus, including showing various kinds of relationships among the terms. For more details about indexing, see *How to Index* (Volume 4 in this series).

An **abstract** on the other hand is a summary of a text (e.g., of a book or an article). It is usually quite short (less than 1000 words). A documentation centre can compile a number of abstracts into a volume. Another usual way for handling abstracts is to have a standard format with one field used for entering abstracts.

Users of a documentation centre will find abstracts useful for two reasons:
a) considerably reduced amount of primary information
b) emphasis given to aspects of particular interest.

Document Storage

A document, in whatever format it is - paper, tape or disk - has to be stored following a certain system so that it can be retrieved from the collection when needed with minimum trouble involved. A complete system has the following components:
- device or facility to help in retrieval
- physical containers of documents
- order to be followed in arranging the documents

The device or facility to help in retrieval is in the form of the cataloguing undertaken. The retrieval device could be a card catalogue, a list of catalogue entries or a computerised database.

In terms of the physical container to hold the documents, the most common item used for storage is the folder. Folders can be used to contain individual documents or sets of related documents clipped, stapled or fastened together. The folders could be placed inside filing cabinets, or are placed into upright boxes that are stored on shelves. As for books, the common physical container is a shelf.

Complementing the use of physical containers is the order by which the documents are arranged inside. The system can be as simple as an alphabetical order by author or source (whether an individual or an organisation), or based on the geographical scope, the chronological order by date of production or acquisition, or according to the nature, size or format of the document. Documents may also be grouped according to their subject matters.

Assigning an Indication of a Document's Location

To keep the documents arranged according to the desired order, and to make it easy to know where to return documents, it is often necessary to assign notations that indicate their locations. Often, the term **record numbering** is also used to refer to this process, as numbers are usually, but not necessarily always, used to comprise the notations.

Similarly, many terms have been used to refer to the indication of the document's location, among them:
- document symbol
- record number
- record ID
- catalogue signature
- classification code
- call number

Usually, documents which are kept together, such as in a folder, box or shelf, are assigned numbers or notations which are sequential, such as:
numeric: 1, 2, 3...
alpha: A to Z
alphanumeric: A1, A2, A3..., B1, B2, B3...
numeric-alpha: 1a, 1b, 1c..., 2a, 2b, 2c...

Years or names of months, names of sources, and geographical terms, or codes to represent them, can be included in the notations, such as:
1999-001, 1999-002…, 2000-001, 2000-002...
AI-001, AI-002..., HRW-001, HRW-002...
AFR-001, AFR-002…, ASIA-001, ASIA-002..., EUR-001…

Alternatively, a document may be assigned a notation depending on the class to which it belongs. The topic of *classification* is discussed in the next section.

There are several steps to follow in indicating the location of a document. What a documentalist does first is to determine what the notation for a document will be. For instance, if the order of arrangement is consecutive, the documentalist needs to find out the last notation used, or if a classification scheme is used, to select the appropriate class. The next step is marking the document with its locator. If it is a book, the notation is usually painted on the spine. Folders usually have tabs where the notations can be written on, while sheets of paper can have the locators stamped on them. Afterwards, the documents can be put in place.

To complete the cataloguing process, the assigned locators are also entered into the catalogue cards, list or database used for retrieval.

Assigning locators on containers (folders, cabinets, boxes or shelves) is also usually done. The notations often consist of the first characters of the locators of the documents found within them.
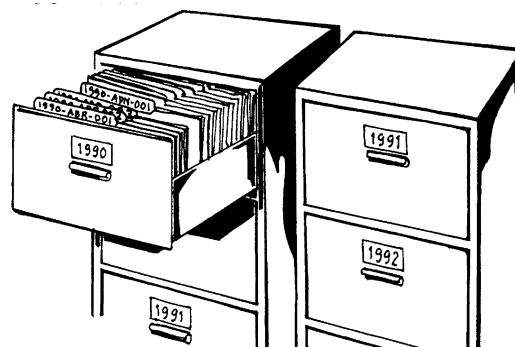
Classification

Classification is a method of assigning document locators based on the identified predominant subject matter of a document. Such a method has its advantages:

a. all major documents on a particular subject are easily retrieved at once at the same location in the collection;
b. the intermediary process of searching for required documents in a catalogue or a database can be avoided;
c. unprocessed documents can be sorted and stored temporarily or permanently and then easily found by subject area;
d. users can locate specific documents by browsing around a particular subject, and even come across some more pertinent documents they have never even thought of, without the help of a documentalist.

There are three classification schemes that are widely used all over the world, the Library of Congress Classification, the Universal Decimal Classification and the Dewey Decimal Classification schemes. They are all general schemes aimed to cover the whole spectrum of knowledge. They could be too general to be applied in a specialist documentation centre, but it is possible to extract some concepts and transfer them to local use. Human rights documentation centres often develop their own schemes. A sample *Classification Scheme for Human Rights Documentation* has been developed by Iva Caccia, a Canadian human rights librarian, and is available from HURIDOCS.

Unique Record IDs

Often, when working with certain kinds of documents, it is necessary to ensure that each document locator is unique, meaning that it is used only once, and only for one document. This is especially necessary when using computerised databases to store the information about the documents in one's collection. In computer terminology, such document locators are referred to as **unique record IDs**. Most database software applications have a feature that runs automatic unique record numbering.

Often, bibliographic records in a computerised database get unique record IDs at the same time that they carry other locators that point to the main documents. This is especially true when a classification scheme is used to organise the primary documents.

HURIDOCS Bibliographic Standard Formats

In 1985, HURIDOCS published the *Standard Formats for the Recording and Exchange of Information on Human Rights*, by Bjørn Stormorken. The second revised edition, by a Task Force led by Aída María Noval, was published in December 1993. This edition is entitled *HURIDOCS Standard Formats for the Recording and Exchange of Bibliographic Information Concerning Human Rights*. This book contains forms and guidelines for recording information regarding documents on human rights. The idea behind the tool is to have a basic set of rules that could be used by non-professionals operating in relatively small but highly dynamic documentation centres, that at the same time would be compatible with international standards and comprehensive enough to meet the centres' needs.

The formats are based on international library standards, but have been simplified in order to meet the needs of human rights organisations engaging in "documentation for action". The formats consist of the following parts:
- Record Information Area
- Bibliographic Description Area
- Contents Description Area

Each area contains a number of fields. Some of the fields are mandatory, others are recommended. Completing the various fields in the formats involves the various procedures described earlier. For instance, the Record Information Area requires the entry of information on where the document can be located, while the Bibliographic Description Area contains information that identifies the document, such as its title. Completing the HURIDOCS Bibliographic Standard Formats is in effect undertaking the process of cataloguing. The completed formats can be viewed as records on a computer monitor, or can be used to produce outputs like catalogue lists or print-outs in the form of catalogue cards.

> CATALOGUING = COMPLETING
> BIBLIOGRAPHIC STANDARD FORMATS

Organising Documents concerning Events

What have been discussed so far are techniques that apply mainly for the library-type of documentation. Most of the principles that govern many of the techniques used with libraries are equally applicable in the documentation of events, although some of the actual techniques, such as the use of a classification scheme for storing documents, are not appropriate.

For proper organisation, it would be necessary to consider again the various kinds of documents that a monitoring centre usually holds (see diagram on page 22). Many of the materials could be grouped together according to form, such as pictures, audio recordings of interviews, press cuttings, etc. They may be assigned consecutive document locators. These can be indexed afterwards, such as by using index cards or a computer program, with cross-reference to the relevant events.

Most of the paper documents can be kept in folders. A possibility is to group the documents by events, one event per folder. Completed standard formats can serve as the main contents of the folder, to which will be attached documents about the events such as fact-finding reports and testimonies. The standard formats will also make references to other related materials such as pictures and press cuttings can be located.

Published documents such as annual reports can be organised using the usual techniques in the library-type of documentation.

12. PROVIDING USER SERVICES

Types of Information Retrieval

Retrieval of information could be:
1. *data retrieval* – a particular piece of data that answers a specific need is sought and found. For instance, a user may want to know the name of a victim in a recent case. A more sophisticated level of data retrieval involves making counts or calculations.
2. *document retrieval* – the document that contains data is what is retrieved in this case.
3. *retrieval of an intermediate document* – what is retrieved is not the document itself, but a record with enough information for the user to make a decision whether the document referred to is what is needed. The intermediate document can be an index card, a bibliography, an abstract, or a record in a computer database.

Traditional libraries generally employ the third method of retrieval, with the common use of card catalogues. In addition, if a system allows open access, then document retrieval is possible. Data retrieval, on the other hand, works only in computerised settings where data has to be entered before it can be retrieved. In full text databases, document retrieval is performed by computers.

Assistance to Users

Sometimes, users themselves can find relevant documents, but often, they are assisted by the documentalist, especially if the system set up is a closed access system.

The most common method of providing services to users is through the use of a reading room. Another common method is by lending books and other materials to users. Documentation centres can also do other forms of information dissemination such as by producing reports, publishing abstracts, etc. See *How To Set Up a Documentation Centre* (Volume 3 in this series) for more information on this subject matter.

Open vs. Closed Access

What is meant by **open access** is that the documents are accessible to the user. In other words, the user can go to where the documents are placed, and can browse through them. What it requires is that the documents are arranged with the aid of a classification system.

On the other hand, **closed access** means that the documents are not arranged according to subject matter, but by some other method (e.g., based on the dates that they are acquired). This is often done in recognition of the fact that many documents speak of more than one subject matter. This means that it would be extremely difficult for a user to try retrieving the documents he or she needs by browsing. Rather, a mechanism such as an index card system or a computer software is used to help the user in retrieval.

Loans and Other Methods of Information Dissemination

The persons responsible for the documentation centre have to establish certain rules with regard to the access to documents, dealing among others with opening hours and services such as photocopying of documents.

A main decision is whether documents can be consulted in the centre only or whether users can borrow them. If documents can be lent, specific rules should be developed with regard to:
- categories of borrowers
- types of documents which can and cannot be lent
- number of documents to be lent
- periods for which documents can be lent
- costs

Loans should be registered, with information on the lent document, the borrower, and the date of the loan.

Current Awareness Services

A documentation centre must be pro-active and anticipate the needs of its users, both by actively seeking out and collecting appropriate information materials and by supplying targeted information to its users on a routine basis and ahead of expressed requests.

Targeted current awareness services can be provided for regular users, and is then also called **Selective Dissemination of Information**. It can be carried out through:
- scanning of news sources
- alerting to new literature
- provision of press cuttings
- getting information from the documentation centre's own databases, from remote on-line databases or other Web-based sources
- getting information from mailing lists and newsgroups
- abstracting of books and articles.

Current awareness services can also be provided for a wider public, other organisations and irregular users. This service can consist of:
- a newsletter containing abstracts of newly acquired materials
- a bulletin of press cuttings relevant to the activities of the organisation
- bibliographies of materials available on specific topics
- acquisition lists (lists of documents recently received)
- a list of publications and documents produced by the organisation
- dissemination of all the above through mailing lists and newsgroups.

Services of Investigation-Related Documentation Centres

The nature and type of services provided by investigation-related documentation centres are usually different, mainly because the information that they hold is often confidential. Access to primary documents such as testimonies is limited. Likewise, there should be restricted access to the database that contains essential information itself and at the same time serves as the key to the retrieval of the actual documents. It may be necessary to undertake such security measures as providing aliases for the names of certain persons in the database. Technical methods for protecting data such as use of passwords and encryption can also be considered.

If the database is properly developed, it should be able to produce different kinds of outputs for various users. It may for instance be used for printing out individual cases, such as those being handled by a lawyer, or be used to print out statistical data.

Moreover, a documentation centre can from time to time issue reports that are made public. Such reports can be provided to the users using the techniques of library-type of documentation as discussed above. The documentation centre can also distribute information materials similar to those used in current awareness services in libraries.

Using Computers

If databases are used, then retrieval of information, whether bibliographic information or information on events, is greatly facilitated. The key to maximising their use is the consistent entry of data into the standard formats utilised by the databases. Documentation centres can avail of HURIDOCS tools in this regard. HURIDOCS has developed computerised implementations of both its Bibliographic Standard Formats and Events Standard Formats.

Using the Internet

The Internet can be used in various ways for human rights documentation work. It can be used for disseminating information as well as for searching information. A useful resource in this regard is *Getting online for human rights: frequently asked questions and answers about using the Internet in human rights work* (see Bibliography for details). It contains chapters on:
- locating human rights information on the Internet
- protecting the authenticity and integrity of human rights information on the Internet
- Internet privacy issues
- the Internet as a medium of communication

Conclusion

Information is useful only if it is accessible. The application of the various techniques described in this manual, from determining what to collect, to organising the materials, will amount to nothing if users do not make use of the information materials. The documentation centre should exert efforts to make known to its target clientele the information it holds, and to facilitate the retrieval of materials containing the information. There are some basic principles that guide the search of information. For these, the reader is referred to Volume 6 in this series, *How to Search Information* (forthcoming).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

abstract -- a summary of the contents of a document (e.g., of a book or an article, usually less than 1000 words)

bibliographic description -- set of data that provides a unique and accurate description of a document as a physical carrier of information, among them the title, edition, author and publisher

card catalogue -- a catalogue where each entry or reference is recorded on a separate card

catalogue -- a list of materials contained in a collection, library, or group or libraries or documentation centres, arranged according to some definite plan

cataloguing -- the process of producing a record about a document, such as by recording its bibliographic description and describing its content and then including the resulting short record into a list (catalogue) which users in search of information can refer to

classification -- the process of identifying the term, as chosen from a list of terms, that reflects the predominant subject matter of the document, and using the corresponding notation as an aid in physically storing the document, e.g., in a shelf

contents description -- the process of describing the subject matter and main concepts of a document such as by indexing and abstracting

controlled vocabulary -- a list of terms or descriptors which are as exhaustive and mutually exclusive as possible, and where preferred terms have been chosen over other possible terms, for use by documentation workers and users in handling information

database -- a collection of data, organised in such a manner as to facilitate searching for a particular record or a set of records, or for particular data contained in those records. A good database also allows the production of varying types of outputs, in terms of contents (from minimal to comprehensive data) and in terms of the formats of presentation.

descriptor -- a term used for describing a certain aspect of an event, person, document, place or any other thing

document -- a carrier or container of information

documentation -- a process consisting of several activities, namely:

a) determining what information is needed and establishing means for acquiring it;

b) recording the discovered information and storing such in appropriate containers (called documents) or collecting already-existing documents containing the needed information;

c) organising the documents to make them more accessible; and

d) actually providing the documents to users who need the information, or any specific part of this process.

event -- something that happens, with a beginning and an end, and which progresses until its logical conclusion. It could be a single act, a series of related acts, or a combination of related acts happening together. Moreover, at least one act that it contains should qualify as a human rights violation (e.g., arbitrary arrest which is a violation of the right to liberty), or is akin or similar to such (e.g., legal arrest).

fact-finding -- the process of identifying the violations in one event, and establishing the facts relevant to these violations. Fact-finding and investigation are terms that are used interchangeably.

field -- the space in which a piece of information is recorded, such as a document title, name of author or number of pages

format -- an empty form, consisting of fields, on which information can be recorded. The form can be on paper, or a layout on a word processor, or it can be an entry layout within a database program.

free text -- entry in ordinary language, often lengthy and unformatted. An example of a free text field is one for the narration of what happened in an event.

index term -- a kind of descriptor mainly used for describing the subject matter or concepts contained in a document

indexing -- a method of content description involving the selection of descriptors to represent the subject matter or concepts contained in a document

investigation-related documentation - - documentation conducted in conjunction with fact-finding, including gathering and recording information on events that actually or possibly contain human rights violations

library-type-of documentation - - documentation that involves the collection of published documents and organising these following established techniques in librarianship such as cataloguing

micro-thesaurus -- a short controlled vocabulary, consisting of terms meant for a specific field

record -- a description of one thing, person, group of persons, event or any other entity, consisting of data entered in a set of fields. In other words, a completed format is called a record.

standard format -- a set of fields, arranged in a pre-determined way, with prescribed scope notes. A completed standard format becomes a record.

structured information -- information which is organised in a consistent way with the aid of standard formats

thesaurus -- an elaborate construction of a controlled vocabulary, arranged by themes and topics, and which include in most cases hierarchical relationships among the terms

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Caccia, Iva. *Human Rights Thesaurus*. Ottawa: Human Rights Internet, 1993. Available in French and English from Human Rights Documentation Centre/ Human Rights Research and Education Centre and Human Rights Internet, 57 Louis Pasteur, Ottawa, Canada, K1N 6N5.

Caccia, Iva. *Human Rights Documentation Classification Table*. Ottawa: Iva Caccia, 1995. 28 p. Available from HURIDOCS.

Dueck, Judith. "Setting Up a Human Rights Education Resource Centre", in *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by George Andreopoulos and Richard Pierre Claude. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1997.

Dueck, Judith, Manuel Guzman and Bert Verstappen. *HURIDOCS Events Standard Formats: A Tool for Documenting Human Rights Violations*. Versoix: HURIDOCS, 2001.

Dueck, Judith, Manuel Guzman and Bert Verstappen. *Micro-thesauri: A Tool for Documenting Human Rights Violations*. Versoix: HURIDOCS, 2001.

Guinchat, Claire and Michel Menou. *General Introduction to the Techniques of Information and Documentation Work*. Paris: UNESCO, 1983.

Guzman, Manuel. *Getting the Facts Down: Documenting Human Rights Violations*. Bangkok: Forum-Asia, 1996. Available from Forum-Asia, 109 Suthisarnwinichai Road, Samsennok, Huwaykwang, Bangkok 10310, Thailand.

Hansen, Stephen. *Getting Online for Human Rights: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about Using the Internet in Human Rights Work*. Washington, D.C.: AAAS, 1999.

HURIDOCS Standard Formats for the Recording and Exchange of Bibliographic Information concerning Human Rights. 2 ed. by a HURIDOCS Task Force led by Aida Maria Noval. HURIDOCS: Oslo, 1993. ISBN 82-992816-3-6. Available through HURIDOCS.

HURIDOCS Standard Formats: Supporting Documents. Compiled by Judith Dueck and Aida Maria Noval with HURIDOCS Task Force members. HURIDOCS: Oslo, 1993. ISBN 82-992816-0-1. 133 p. Available through HURIDOCS.

Kannapiran, Chandra, et al. *Basics of Documentation*. New Delhi: Voluntary Health Association of India, 1988. 89 p. Available from Voluntary Health Association of India, 40 Institutional Area, South of I.T.T., New Delhi 110 016, India.

Pallinder, Agneta (ed.) *Information for Human Rights: A HURIDOCS Reader for Information Workers*. Oslo: HURIDOCS, 1993.

Ravindran, D. J., Manuel Guzman and Babes Ignacio. *Handbook on Fact-Finding and Documentation of Human Rights Violations*. Manila: Forum-Asia, 1994. Available from Forum-Asia, 109 Suthisarnwinichai Road, Samsennok, Huwaykwang, Bangkok 10310, Thailand.

Spirer, Herbert F., and Louise Spirer. *Data Analysis for Monitoring Human Rights*. Washington D.C.: American Association for the Advancement of Science in cooperation with HURIDOCS, 1993. Available from AAAS Distribution Center, PO Box 521, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701, United States. New edition forthcoming.

This volume is part of a series of how-to practical manuals aimed to help build the capacity of human rights organisations with regard to monitoring and documentation.

The series consists of the following manuals:
Volume 1: What is Monitoring
Volume 2: What is Documentation
Volume 3: How to Set Up Your Documentation Centre
Volume 4: How to Index
Volume 5: How to Record Names of Persons
Volume 6: How to Search Information
Volume 7: How to Handle Special Kinds of Information Materials
Volume 8: How to Do Meta-Tagging