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2 December 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Document Division
THRU : Chief, Analysis Branch *aw*
SUBJECT : Selection of Documents for Indexing in the Intellofax System.

I. Problem

The number of personnel allocated to indexing reports for the Intellofax System is inadequate to handle the volume of intelligence reporting. Document Division personnel need more knowledge of the value of certain series of documents and in many cases individual documents to make an intelligent selection for the Intellofax System.

In this part, the problem

Facts where are they?

II. Discussion

By whom? It was long ago recognized that certain series of documents had no value for later Intellofax retrieval. These documents in general fell into two categories: either they had no intelligence value, e.g., housekeeping reporting; or the kind of information could be better serviced by another OCR facility, e.g., Biographic Register. The increase in reporting in recent years has made it necessary to explore a number of subject fields and document series for nodexing feasibility. A good many of the present nodex criteria were checked out with one or two CIA offices, but all offices were not contacted and there has been little rechecking to determine if a new need has arisen for nodex material. Some nodex criteria have been adopted after checking only with the Library. Some nodexes are difficult to apply because they are vague, e.g., fragmentary information on Latin America. (What is fragmentary? Should we not be following Latin America since many OCR components aren't?)

The above is not a criticism of Document Division nodex policy. CIA offices have not shown any enthusiasm for participating in nodex policy. (Nodex standards were circulated to major CIA components for comment over a year ago and to this date there has been no response from any office.) (The mass of documentation forced the Document Division to screen certain categories out of the Intellofax System and this screening process was undertaken with a knowledge of Agency interests and years of experience with Intellofax retrieval. However, even though customers have shown no inclination to aid us, nodex has become a "dirty" word in some quarters within the Agency.

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III. Conclusions

Intellofax selection policy should undergo a thorough review with the participation of OCR components and non-OCR components which make use of the System. This review should go far beyond present nodex policy and consider the kind of information service we should supply. This review should look into the following kinds of questions:

What does the word mean? ...

Are the ... was ...

1. Should the Intellofax System specialize subject or area wise?
2. Should the Intellofax System put more emphasis on translation and open source literature? (It is well known that for some areas this is the best source material.)
3. Could not certain types of periodic reporting, e.g. State, be indexed better by some other system?
4. How much overlap is there between Intellofax service and services provided by other OCR Registers?
5. Are there whole sources which could be screened out of Intellofax as being of little value?
6. Could specialized source card files be used in lieu of Intellofax? (This seems feasible for State Dept. Foreign Agriculture Attache Reports.)

The new Intellofax System has the elements to provide a superior document retrieval system. However, the system will only be as good as the documents it retrieves. There is a danger of our becoming the best retrieval for junk ever devised unless the kind of review suggested above is undertaken.

IV. Recommendation

The review suggested above should be instituted and to be effective it is desirable that it have the backing of non-OCR components at the highest level.

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Chief, Selection Section