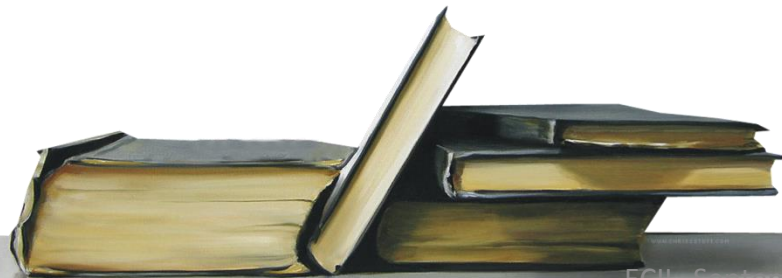




# Information literacy of Croatian subject indexers

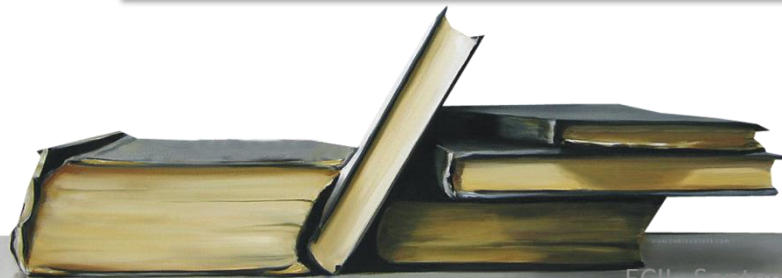
**Kristina Feldvari and Kornelija Petr Balog**





## IL and working environment

“it is increasingly recognised that in the workplace, and more so than in academia, information literacy bears a strong relationship to factors driven by **context** and **working environments**, and that an approach based on defining a set of generic skills, as taught in educational/academic settings, is **not always appropriate** for addressing the multi-faceted requirements of employment” (Goldstein, 2016)

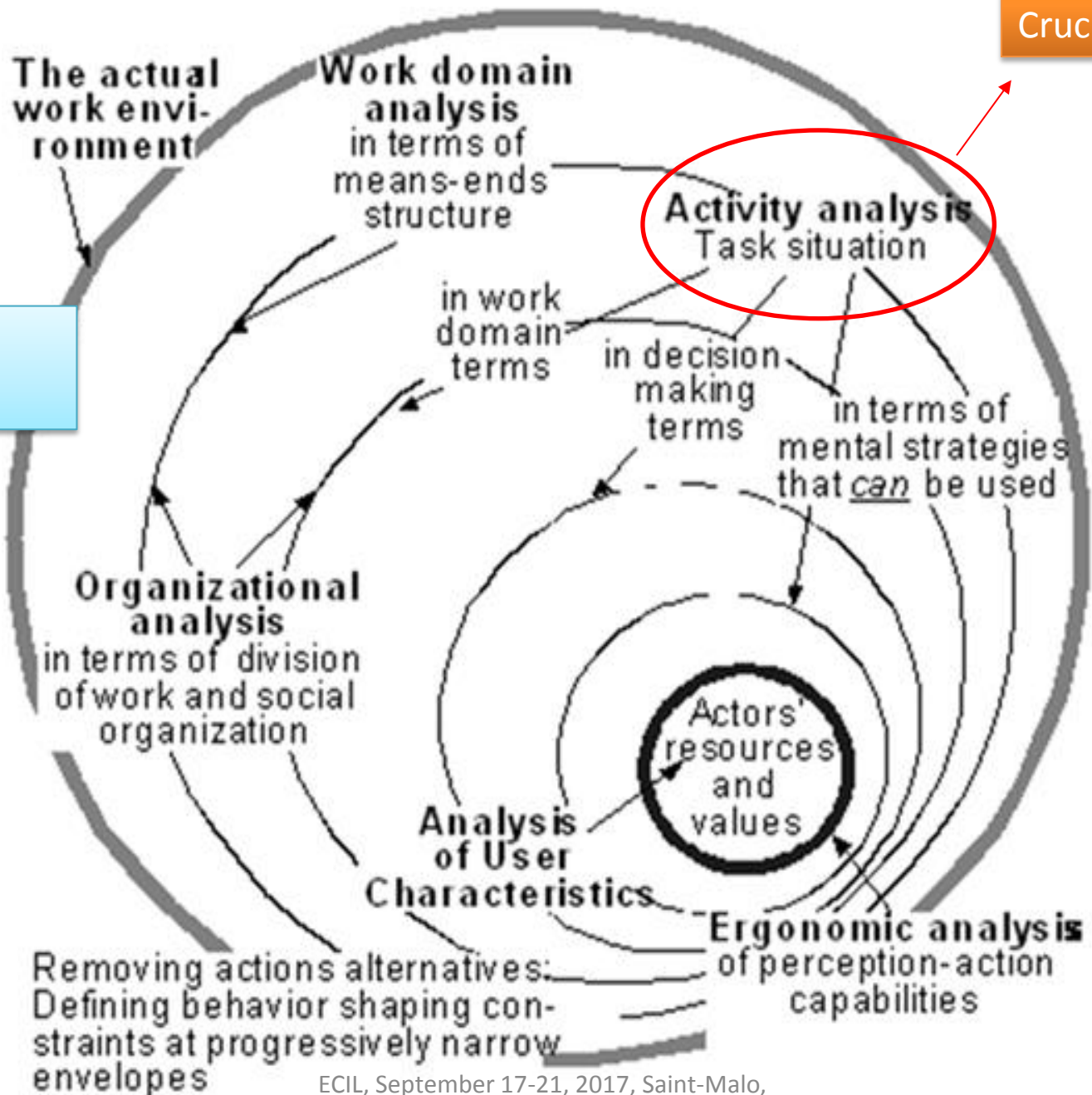




## Cognitive Work Analysis Framework and Workplace IL

- Workplace IL – should observe individual actors as members of micro-professional community → a complex work and practice context
- Domain-analysis (Hjørland, 1995)
- Cognitive Work Analysis – CWA (Rasmussen, Pejtersen and Goodstein 1994; Vicente, 1999; Fidel and Pejtersen 2004)
  - A work-centered conceptual framework
  - Performs a cognitive work and context analysis
  - Context encompasses a number of constraints and obstacles that mold actors' behaviors

Crucial for IL skills



Five CWA dimensions



# Subject indexing and CWA

- Subject indexing
  - Unpredictable, changeable and interpretative
  - Context-dependable
- We must study
  - Process itself (whole and individual steps)
  - Mental processes of indexers
  - Constraints and obstacles



# Croatian subject indexers and their workplace IL

- Research goal:
  - to obtain the model of subject indexing process and procedures of Croatian subject indexers using the CWA framework.
  - Study of actor's information behavior
  - Study of their work-context (problems and obstacles)
- CWA – ideal framework (Fourth dimension – Activity Analysis)



# Research

- Research questions:
  - What are the subject indexing steps of Croatian indexers and what affects them?
  - What sort of information needs and behavior do they demonstrate in their work?
  - What types of sources and information do they use in order to do their work?
  - What type of constraints and obstacles do they encounter in their work?



# Sample

- 10 experienced subject indexers from five Croatian libraries (two per library)
- Library criteria: significance, type and functionality and library software used
  - Two libraries with dual function, one academic and three public libraries
- Purposeful sampling





# Methodology

- Qualitative methodology of comparative case study
- Controlled comparison method of individual subjecting task
- Findings:
  - Simulated subject indexing task (part of a semi-structured interview)
    - Think-aloud method and analysis of verbal and video-recording



....

- Subject indexers – asked to describe individual steps of the indexing process (typical day) and to name obstacles they encounter  
→ compared to data obtained through simulated indexing tasks  
(what they do, and what they think they do)



- Simulated indexing task
  - Indexers asked to index 3 documents and describe aloud their mental processes while doing it
- Video-recorded
- Research conducted in April and May 2013
- Semi-structured interviews – 15 min
- Simulated indexing task – 90 min per indexer



# Results

- Subject indexing model of Croatian indexers
  - (1) browsing the document and determining what it is about (aboutness),
  - (2) creation of "temporary" subject headings (key concepts),
  - (3) searching for the final subject heading,
  - (4) selecting, combining and assigning of the final subject heading(s).



- Indexers prefer using the existing subject headings in their internal database to creating new headings
- Constraints and obstacles
  - Third step: searching for appropriate subject heading
  - Fourth step: selecting, combining and assigning of final subject headings



- Other constraints:
  - out-of-date and insufficient search capabilities and options of current automated library systems;
  - no national subject indexing manual;
  - failure to create additional access points (for lead-in terms);
  - no internal syntactic rules;
  - failure to create a scope note field,
  - duplicating records for subject headings in the system
  - ....



- Subject indexers –
  - Not always familiar with the search capabilities of internal databases, other national and international OPACs, the Internet
  - Problems with retrieving the appropriate subject headings (failure to identify the right term in the search phase)
    - Personal knowledge and education – particularly important in the phase ‘research’



# Suggestions for improvement of present information systems in Croatia

- Systems must be upgraded:
  - presence and visibility of search capabilities guidelines with a clear description of a single type of search option,
  - *search history (users need to visualize not only their search process but also that of their colleagues and need to be able to see a previously conducted search),*
  - a keyword search option where all instances of a certain term are found
  - advanced system functions such as an automatic suggestion of possible search terms





# Suggestions...

- advanced system options that would offer corrections in case of misspelled search terms, (e.g., „*Did you mean ...?*“),
- hyperlinks to other records containing relevant indexing terms as well as to semantic tree of associated indexing terms (e.g. preferred, broader, narrower and related term/s).
  - More suitable and user-friendly for searching and retrieving
  - Subject indexers – additional training (IL skills)



Thank you for your attention!

