The case study is about Faceted Approach to Knowledge Organisation and Retrieval in the Cultural Heritage sector. The case study looks at the current methods of organising and retrieving information in cultural and heritage sector like museums, discusses thesauri as a Knowledge Organisation System, the faceted approach to Knowledge Organisation Systems together with the FACET Project and the thesauri in Web-based systems.

The case study starts by talking about how searches are done in databases in museums and digital heritage institutions. These databases are indexed collections which users can search for information. The search though are limited to controlled vocabulary meaning users will only get results for specific search words and not the more general search adopted by search engines in the Web. There are both advantages and disadvantages in these methods of search. The advantage being the users will get more specific data and information according to their search without having to go through unrelated materials but the disadvantage of this method is that users of the system will not be able get materials that are not directly related but have relevance to their search therefore might not get the benefit of the full system as some information is not available to users. The controlled vocabulary is used for records that are transferred to the web and for those that are made for the web. This approach is useful as there are many collections that are created before the creation of internet based retrieval therefore allowing past collections to be presented on the web for users to access. There are many intellectual knowledge structures and indexed collections such as Dewey Decimal Classification used in a library or Art Architecture Thesaurus which may be used my museums and there can also be Knowledge Organisation Systems made for specialist applications and subject areas which would be useful for areas which have many special vocabularies used in the area.

The Case study goes on to talk about Networking KOS Services in which it reveals that it is possible to configure search options greater that it is currently offered in the web but these need different way of approaching the KOS on how it can better provide for the digital environment. In the past these KOS were made with presumptions that they are used in print form for reference but now they are published for the Web therefore new ways of publishing these information should be created to make it easier to access them as the interfaces used before were just for display and lacked a standardised application programming interface (API) which hindered interoperability. The case study talks in depth about thesaurus and the FACET approach which looked at the potential of faceted thesauri in retrieval. The thesaurus is explained as a controlled vocabulary indexing tools which is a type of KOS generated by a set on international standards. The thesaurus is a useful KOS as it gives users a way to look for information regarding a particular term by relating it to other vocabulary which is equivalents or synonyms. According to the case study there are many recommendations to use faceted approach to thesaurus. This would mean the thesaurus be
divided into facets which are homogenous class of concepts therefore grouping similar words which share certain characteristics together. This would be a very useful approach for users of the thesaurus as they would be able to look at information which are related to each other even if they do not mean same thing or are not synonyms but have the same characteristics. This would enable users to learn more about different areas which are related to a certain vocabulary which is searched instead of learning more only on the particular vocabulary searched. This would make the thesaurus a more interactive learning medium instead. The FACET Project was a research on investigating the potential of the thesaurus in retrieval which aimed at looking at query based searches. This means that users of the system will get to search vocabularies that they would like to find out about rather than be fed with the only information available in the system. This is a good way of implementing a more useable thesaurus as users are given more freedom on searching for the information they need. The research was done using a semantic expansion approach therefore giving users information that relate to what they have searched for as well as the original search. There was also evaluation sessions done to evaluate the prototypes created and changing the prototypes based on the feedback received from the way the users used the system. This is was a good way to mirror the system based on real world users usage therefore making it easier for users and more users orientated. The main problem found by the research was the limited ability for the different databases and indexed collections to be inter-operated or connected to each other as they all have different interfaces and methods of being classified. This method of searching in a thesaurus has a huge potential as it will enable the thesaurus to be a large information system that has information regarding most topics and vocabulary as well as empowering users with more knowledge on a particular topic rather than just giving the basic information or data to users. This approach will not only be useful for private users but also for large organisations and governments as they will be powered with better knowledge with easier access to information. As the case study mentions though there should be a common platform which is used by all the collections of data and information. The case study also mentions Simple Knowledge Organisation Systems (SKOS) API which has recently been developed as well, defines the core set of methods for programmatically accessing and querying a thesaurus. This API has to be further developed so that they can be used by various different sectors to include their collections for Web retrieval in standard manner therefore being able to link the different thesaurus together for the ease of use for the users on the Internet.
References
