

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CLASSIFICATION

SESSION 8 – DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

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Session Overview

- This session will introduce you to one of the major classification schemes; the Dewey decimal classification scheme by explaining the principles by which it is developed and its major features



Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Topic One : Features of the Dewey Decimal Classification
- Topic Two : Overview of the DDC
- Topic Three: Advantages and disadvantages of DDC

Reading List

- Read Chapter 13 of Recommended Text – Chan, Lois Mai. (2007) *Cataloging and classification: an introduction* Lanham, Md. Scarecrow Press



- Topic One :
- Features of the Dewey Decimal Classification

Dewey Decimal Classification(DDC)

- DDC was developed by Melville Louis Kossuth Dewey.
- Born on December 10, 1851 at Adams Center in New York, United States.
- Died on December 26, 1931.
- Dewey was assistant librarian, aged 21, at the library of Amherst College. Here, he created the Scheme in **1876**.
- Also, helped establish the American Library Association (ALA) in **1876**.
- Due to his works He is considered by many as “the Father of Modern Librarianship”



Dewey Decimal Classification(DDC)

- Today, the DDC is published in full and abridged versions by Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC)
- Both versions are print and electronic formats
- OCLC owns all copyrights rights to the DDC
- The DDC is used in over 138 countries and has been translated into over 30 languages.



FEATURES OF THE DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION

- **Relative Location:** the scheme allows for materials to be shelved at relative locations as collection grows.
- **Detailed specification of subjects:** involves listing of subjects in much more detail. This made room for treatment of narrow areas knowledge.
- **Expandable scheme:** Gaps are lefts intentionally for expansion. The decimal system helps to accept new areas of knowledge.



FEATURES OF THE DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION(contd)

- **Number Building:** the schedule provides directions for use and the building of a number for complex subjects.
- **Notation:** The DDC incorporates the pure notation and is made up numbers or Arabic numerals. The numbers are used with the decimal expansion as the need arises.
- **Relative index:** the index shows where a given topic can be located in the scheme. Thus, it helps in detail classification of materials.



- Topic Two :

Overview of the DDC

Overview of the DDC

- In the DDC, basic classes are organized by disciplines or fields of knowledge.
- At the broadest level, it is divided into **10 main classes**, which together cover the entire world of knowledge.
- Each main class is further divided into **10 divisions**
- And each division is further disintegrated into **sections**. (not all the numbers for the divisions and sections have been used)



Overview of the DDC

- The main Structure of the DDC is presented in the DDC Summaries.
- The first section contains the **10 main classes**
- The second contains the **100 divisions**
- The third contains the **1000 sections**



Overview of the DDC

- It uses only the Arabic numerals on the well defined categories and well developed hierarchies.
- The first digit in Notation Represents the main class
- The second digit is the division
- The third is the section
- Eg A material with number 613 means
The 6 is (600) the main class, technology
The 1 is (10) the division, medicine
The 3 is the section, personal health and safety.



Overview of the DDC

- A decimal point follows after the third digit in a class number, after which division by ten continues to the specific degree of classification needed.
- The decimal point(.) is in the psychological sense of a break or pause and not of a mathematical sense.
- A number should never end in a 0 zero anywhere to the right of the decimal point.



Main Classes in DDC

- The main classes in the DDC includes,
- 000- computer science, information and library science and general works
- 100- Philosophy and Psychology
- 200- Religion
- 300- Social Sciences
- 400- Languages
- 500-Science



Main Classes in DDC

- 600- Technology
- 700- Arts and Recreation
- 900- History and Geography



Revision of the DDC

- The DDC is revised in approximately 7 to 10 years intervals. The Editorial board checks the **Schedules** and **tables regularly**. the divisions made include
 - Expansion
 - Reduction
 - Relocation



Revision of the DDC

- Completely revised Schedules
- New Schedules



- Topic Three:

Advantages and disadvantages of DDC



Advantages of DDC

- It is hospitable: this means it allows for expansion and accommodation is made in case of new additions
- It is hierarchical: The scheme breaks the subjects down in a relatively well structured order of disciplines, divisions and sections.
- Easy to remember: with the use of the Arabic numerals, it is easily understandable irrespective of the language of the user



Advantages of DDC

- Excellent relative index and schedules are inexpensive
- The DDC's bi weekly updates which is online, keeps the scheme always up to date



Disadvantages of the DDC

- The provision of only ten classes make the base too short, resulting in lengthy class numbers.
- The divisions and subdivisions by only 10 places leads to squeezing of subjects into a conglomerate last division called the “others”
- Also the separation of certain concepts and subjects have been widely criticized by scholars, especially the separation of language from literature, social sciences from history, etc.



Disadvantages of the DDC

- It is also not as easily expandable as compared to the library of congress scheme. that is, when new subjects or technologies emerge where they would be inserted would be difficult
- There is also the potential for large class call numbers as a result of number building.
- It is also too general that special libraries would find it unsuitable to use.



Disadvantages of DDC, contd.

- There is also a lack of balance in the DDC. This is due to the difference in rates of growth, resulting in an uneven structure.

