

# CATALOGING AND CLASSIFICATION

**L**ibraries provide service and access to information in multiple forms and formats. But to be useful, such materials must be organized and accessible. They must be efficiently described and cataloged, and consistently classified and arranged. Easy and quick retrieval is essential to ensure user-friendly libraries.

*Cataloging* is the process of creating bibliographic records of works according to accepted rules or standards. This helps users efficiently survey a library's holdings and determine where items are located. Cataloging has two phases: descriptive and subject cataloging.

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## **The Catalog**

A library catalog is an organized set of bibliographic records. It can also be the list of holdings of a particular library or of many libraries connected via computer. It may include books (referred to as monographs), serials, audiovisual materials, computer files, and digital information. The catalog can exist in several formats, but we will discuss only the card catalog and the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC).

The card catalog was the most widely used type of catalog until the early 1990s. Entries were divided into author cards, title/series cards, and subject cards and alphabetically arranged within each category.

OPAC started in the late 1970s and is now the most widely used format. Bibliographic records are stored in a database and can be quickly retrieved for display on a computer terminal. OPAC provides wider access, since users can retrieve information from any participating library or even search online from their home computer.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever catalog format a library chooses, it should be flexible, up to date, and easy to use and maintain. The card catalog and the OPAC are both flexible. Entries can be added or removed as items are added to or discarded from the collection.

## **Cataloging and Classification**

Now, we move to how to catalog and classify library materials. By familiarizing yourself with the general processes, you will be able to ensure that established methods are applied at your school or college library.

Cataloging can be divided into two categories. In original cataloging, all of the procedures are

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performed by local library staff. In copy cataloging, records are copied or downloaded into the local library's catalog.

Original cataloging can be divided into two phases: descriptive cataloging and subject cataloging. Subject cataloging has two additional stages: subject heading and classification.

Consistency and uniformity are important in cataloging. Rules and codes have been formulated to meet these needs. Such rules are especially important when the library joins a network or its catalog becomes part of a shared database. Catalogers need to be familiar with the sources containing these universally accepted rules. Here are some standard processes and references:

### Descriptive Cataloging

*The Anglo-American Cataloging Rules*, Second Edition, 2002 Revision (referred to as AACR2R) is the major international standard for cataloging all types of materials, including books, pamphlets, printed sheets, cartographic materials, manuscripts, music and sound recordings, motion pictures and video records, graphic materials, computer files, three-dimensional artifacts and realia, microform, and serials. The 2002 edition is the latest, although there is a 2003 update. It comes in a loose-leaf format and can be purchased through the American Library Association (<http://www.ala.org>).

*Part I* covers the description aspect of cataloging. Bibliographic description uses a certain sequence of areas and elements to describe the item being cataloged. The main description areas are *title* and *statement of responsibility*, *edition*, *type of publication*, *publication information*, *physical description*, *series*, *notes*, and *standard number*. Each area is further subdivided into smaller units known as elements.

Access points are headings or portions of the record that can be used to search for the item. This category is further broken down into selection of access point, selection of name to be used as basis for the heading, and construction of the heading.

### Subject Cataloging

The second step in completing the cataloging process is selecting and assigning subject headings. Using a standardized list of subject headings helps ensure consistency. Only one standard should be used, to avoid conflicting headings. Subject headings enable the catalog user to find everything the library has on a given subject. The two most popular tools used to perform this task are the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* and the *Sears List of Subject Headings*.

## The card catalog was the most widely used type of catalog until the early 1990s.

The *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, established by the U.S. Library of Congress, is the most comprehensive list. It provides an alphabetical list of all subject headings, cross-references, and subdivisions. The print edition is updated annually and is available in microfiche format, updated quarterly. *Classification Plus* is the electronic version on CD-ROM. *Library of Congress Subject Headings Weekly* is available on

the Web at <http://www.lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/cps/wls.html>.

This is a weekly compilation of headings that LC catalogers have created, changed, and deleted. LCSH is useful for large libraries.<sup>2</sup>

The *Sears List of Subject Headings*, published by H.W. Wilson Company,<sup>3</sup> is more useful for small public libraries and school media centers.



### Classification

After assigning subject headings, the next step is to assign classification letters or numbers to a work so it can be filed on the shelf. The classification number is normally placed on the spine of the book, where it is easily visible. The librarian assigns these letters and numbers after examining the title page, preface, foreword, introduction, table of contents, and excerpts from the text.

The most commonly used methods are the Dewey Decimal System and the Library of Congress Classification Scheme.

**1. The Dewey Decimal Classification System** is used by most small and medium-sized public libraries and school media centers. OCLC/Forest Press publishes *Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index* in two editions, full and



abridged. Their homepage is <http://www.oclc.org>. The electronic version of DDC 21 is the *Dewey for Windows* in CD-ROM format.<sup>4</sup>

DDC uses numbers to divide knowledge into 10 subject classes. Each of these is further divided numerically into subdivisions and sections, while maintaining a hierarchical arrangement. The 10 main classes are:

- 000 Generalities
- 100 Philosophy & Psychology
- 200 Religion
- 300 Social Sciences
- 400 Language
- 500 Natural Science & Mathematics



Photos from top left, clockwise: A librarian shows children how to use the Dewey Decimal System. Cataloging/classification tools. Cataloging goes faster on the computer. Inset, Placing a classification spine label on a library book.



**OPAC provides wider access, since users can retrieve information from any participating library or even search online from their home computer.**

- 600 Technology (Applied Sciences)
- 700 The Arts
- 800 Literature & Rhetoric
- 900 Geography & History

### 2. The Library of Congress Classification Scheme

(LC Classification) was originally developed for the books in this huge library but has been adopted by many large libraries. Combining letters and numbers, it divides the entire field of knowledge into 21 groups. Letters represent the subject classes, while numbers are added for subclasses. Information about the LC classification scheme, including the class schedules for both print and electronic versions, can be found in the library's Web site.<sup>5</sup> The main classes in the LC classification are as follows:

- A General Works
- B Philosophy. Psychology. Religion
- C Auxiliary Sciences of History
- D History: General and Old World
- E-F History: America
- G Geography. Anthropology
- H Social Sciences
- J Political Science
- K Law
- L Education
- M Music
- N Fine Arts
- P Language and Literature
- Q Science
- R Medicine
- S Agriculture
- T Technology
- U Military Science
- V Naval Science
- Z Bibliography. Library Science. Information Resources (General)

### Cutter's Three-Figure Author Table

A Cutter number or book number is added to the DDC or LC number to create a unique call number for each item in the collection. The number is derived from C.A. Cutter's Three-Figure Author Table. Cutter's table uses a system based on the author's name.<sup>6</sup> Some libraries find a simplified system to be adequate.

### MARC (MACHINE READABLE CATALOGING)

This is not a tool used in cataloging, but rather a way of organizing data so that the computer can process it correctly. Descriptions and headings are created according to AACR2R.

The MARC format was developed to standardize machine-readable bibliographic data so that all kinds of library materials can be read by a variety of automated library systems. MARC organizes the catalog record into fields and assigns the various parts of the record to these fields.

According to Bowman, "Each field is introduced by a three-digit number called a tag, e.g. 008, 100, 245. In most cases, the field is broken down into *subfields*, using subfield codes."<sup>7</sup> Below is a list of the principal fields relating to AACR2R in a MARC 21 record.<sup>8</sup>

- 100 Main entry heading: personal author
- 110 Main entry heading: corporate body
- 111 Main entry heading: conference
- 130 Main entry heading: uniform title
- 240 Uniform title
- 243 Collective title
- 245 Title and statement of responsibility
- 250 Edition
- 260 Publication, etc.
- 300 Physical description
- 440 Series in added entry form
- 490 Series not in added entry form
- 5— Notes
- 700 Added entry: person
- 710 Added entry: corporate body
- 711 Added entry: conference
- 8— Added entry: series

### Conclusion

Library automation began with cataloging, which is also where it has had the biggest impact. It's come a long way since then, but catalogers will undoubtedly continue to play a vital role in developing new and innovative standards. Rules and standards will probably continue to be used by libraries, as they remain the best way to link the information and the user.

It is important to adopt and maintain cataloging and classification standards in the school or college library and to keep abreast of changes in these standards. This enables the library to become a gateway to knowledge not only for local users, but also distance learners and other patrons. ✍



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### REFERENCES

1. Mary L. Kao, *Cataloging and Classification for Library Technicians* (New York: The Haworth Press, 2001), p. 13.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23.
3. See [http://famousfirstfacts.com/print/searlst\\_18th.cfm](http://famousfirstfacts.com/print/searlst_18th.cfm).
4. Kao, pp. 25.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25. See <http://lcweb.loc.gov>.
6. A Cutter table can be found at <http://www.itsmarc.com/crs/cutr0001.htm>.
7. J. H. Bowman, *Essential Cataloging* (London: Facet Publishing, 2003), p. 17.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 19.