

# Book Reviews

Edited by Michèle Hudon

Book Review Editor

**Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative index.** 22<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by Joan S. Mitchell et.al. Dublin, OH. : OCLC, 2003. 4v (1xxvii, 731 p;xvi, 1250 p.;1074 p; 934 p) ISBN 0-910608-0-9 (Hb).

With nearly 130 years of eventful and checkered history, the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) is the oldest living yet thriving modern library classification. Having undergone 21 revisions, it is the most applied library classification structure all over the world. Apart from its use in libraries in more than 135 countries across six continents, many national and trade bibliographies use it for content organization. Furthermore, it is now making successful forays into the world of electronic documents and networked information.

The print version of the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition was released in September 2003, two months later than the scheduled time of July 2003, and two months after the release of the electronic version, WebDewey. The period between print editions now seems settled to seven years as a matter of policy. As WebDewey, on the other hand, is updated on a quarterly basis, what really constitutes a new edition is problematic; edition is rolling, always in a flux without much fixity.

The last half century, and more specifically the tenure of Benjamin A. Custer as editor (1956-1980; Editions 16-19), has been an era of structural changes in the DDC, backed by professional management and organizational planning. Custer was instrumental in not only resuscitating the system, but also in putting DDC back on the path of progress. His able successor, Dr. John P. Comaromi, edited the 20<sup>th</sup> edition (1989) and ushered in a period of simplification and consolidation. Following the acquisition of Forest Press by OCLC in 1988, much more research has gone into making new editions of the DDC. The OCLC Office of Research has involved itself in classification research, especially in the harmonization of various knowledge classification systems and mapping of DDC numbers to subject headings, above all to make DDC capable of organizing electronic information of every sort. The

acquisition of DDC by OCLC has also inaugurated an era of new products and services, along with organized marketing. DDC21 (1996) was a product of high IT, and the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition can safely be termed a child of network technology. It is indeed the first edition produced in the web environment. To stay abreast of current developments on knowledge practices, the editors relied on the Internet and electronic databases for new topics and terms. Editors and policy makers got constant feedback and suggestions via the Internet to add new features and to achieve accuracy and efficiency. In addition to the feedback and expert advice, this edition, as usual, is based on actual classification of three quarters of a million current books in the Decimal Classification Division of the Library of Congress since 1996.

WebDewey (2003) and Abridged WebDewey (2004) are now only available on the Internet to licensed users. WebDewey is an enhanced version of the Dewey database of terms and numbers available in the print edition. Updated quarterly, it is only accessible via the Internet on an annual subscription basis. It provides much more facilities including key words navigation. Annotation feature allows classifiers to add and share notes about local classification changes. WebDewey is available within the full OCLC cataloguing services environment. It provides many access points with many search and browse indexes. It makes the location of Dewey numbers an "easy" game.

The annually updated Dewey for Windows on CD ceased publication in 2001; this decision may hurt the libraries in developing countries where the Internet, due to poor telecommunication infrastructure and unreliable services, is not easily accessible.

### *Organization of the system*

The print DDC22 in four volumes containing a total of 4076 pages has been divided into eleven sections marked A/K as follows:

*Volume 1 Sections A/G*

- A xi-xxxvi Prefatory text, notes and new features.
- B xxxvii-1xiii Introduction to the DDC system. Describes the theory and practical procedures for number building. In a nutshell, it is a concise operational manual for using the DDC.
- C lxxv-lxxiv Glossary: Brief definitions of terms used in the theory and practice of the DDC.
- D 1xxv-1xxvii Index to the terms and concepts introduced in sections A/C.
- E 1-181 Manual: A guide to the interpretation and comprehension of some ambiguous numbers. Compares and contrasts analogous or seemingly similar subjects in the schedules and tables. Epitomizes the policies of the Decimal Classification Division of the Library of Congress.
- F 183-713 Six tables with their subdivisions.
- G 715-731 Equivalence table of relocated and reused numbers from the previous edition.

*Volume 2 Sections H & I*

- H v-xvi Three main summaries.
- I 1-1250 Schedules of classes 000-599.

*Volume 3 Section J*

- J 1-1074 Schedules of classes 600-999.

*Volume 4 Section K*

- K 1-928 Relative index: Alphabetical and structural index of subjects and topics listed in the context of disciplines and their corresponding numbers in schedules and tables.

The new edition reflects the current thinking in knowledge mapping and the emergence of new terminology. Progress made in understanding the user approaches in accessing information and users' expectations from a classification structure has been the focus of the new edition. The revision process has received considerable input from a commissioned survey, conducted by George D'Elia (of the State University of New York (SUNY), at Buffalo, of DDC users within the USA, Canada, UK and Australia, In addition to D'Elia's survey, the Editorial Policy Committee (DCEPC), both a recommendatory and supervising committee, and an apex body continued to associate outside experts, institutions and associations for suggestions on national and cultural issues, with a view to reducing inherent biases. The international survey has led to improvement in geographic areas, as well as in the representation of law, political

systems and parties, languages, literatures and historical periods. It is a healthy trend to involve *inter alia* experts from other knowledge organization systems, e.g. Professor I.C. McIlwaine (UDC) and Dr. Joseph Miller (Sears List) in the revision and review process. A few areas were pre-tested in some U.S. and foreign libraries. Concern for user convenience has continued, though no new special or user-friendly device appears to have been incorporated, with the possible exception of an increase in the number of multilevel summaries; this facilitates the scanning and subsequent location of numbers without undue scurry.

*Changes*

DDC22 is the second edition prepared by Joan S. Mitchell who took over as editor in 1993. It carries forward the policies and improvements started in DDC21, especially the onslaught on the Christian and western cultural bias in the schedules and tables. The plan for reducing Christian bias in 200 Religion, initiated in DDC21, has now been completed, with some additional provisions in 296 and 297.

An outstanding change has been the abrogation of Table 7 Persons. The functions of Table 7 are now filled by using T1-08 and whatever notation is appropriate from 011-999. There are at least six places in the tables and 12 places in the schedules where the use of T7 was prescribed; what good the abolition of T7 has produced is not clear. In fact, it does make number building in some cases a bit circuitous, especially while using Table 3C. It has also resulted in the reuse of many DDC 21 numbers with new meanings as in e.g.:

Title	DDC 21	DDC 22
Artworks	704+5(T7)=704.5	704.08+8 (from by scientists Collection of English poetry about lawyers
Collection of English poetry about lawyers	821.0080352344	821.008035208834

However, some numbers remain the same e.g., Social customs of artists 390.47 (both in DDC21 and DDC22). A few numbers have also become shorter in length.

In compliance with the recommendations of D'Elia's survey, all works relating to directories of travel facilities such as hotels, lodges, motels, inns, have been shifted to 910.46 and to 913/919 whereas

647.94 continues to be in place for general information about hotels.

A common practice in previous editions, that is full class or extensive revisions (phoenix schedules), appear to have been discontinued in the preparation of DDC22. But minor changes are numerous. There are more than one thousand relocations and discontinuations of class numbers. Some 40 numbers have been reused. Routine revisions involving expansions, reductions, deletions and relocations are outlined in the table below:

004-006	Data processing and computer science. New topics accommodated, but general structure the same.
200	Further work on the removal of Christian bias and expansion of 296 and 297. Contents of 291 Comparative religion distributed to 200-209 with obviously brief numbers, and more space for expansions. For example, 291 has been shifted to 200, and so 291.1 becomes 201. There are more than sixty relocations in religion of which more than half are from 291 to 201-209. As a result, standard subdivisions of 200 have been shifted to 200.1-.9. Advantages for the representation of non-Christian religions are obvious.
340	Law. 341 International law has become Law of nations with new numbers for human rights and inter governmental organizations. Major relocations in 341.7 International economic and social laws.
510	Mathematics (completely revised in DDC18 [1971]) substantially updated. Numerical analysis, formerly a part of 515, upgraded and shifted to 518, a vacant section.
543	All aspects of Analytical chemistry, formerly dispersed, have been brought back to 543.1-543.8.
610	Reworded as "Medicine and health". Improved indexing of medical topics.
640	Now titled "Home and family management" with some topics transferred to 910 Travel.
930-990	Historical periods updated. About 280 relocations in this section alone.
T2	Area table updated for geographic areas, historical periods and persons. About 280 relocations in this table alone.
T5 and T6	Table 5 renamed "National and ethnic groups". Tables expanded to make provisions for American native people and languages.

However, all these changes are not those projected as slated changes for DDC22 in the DDC21 (1996), namely in 520 Astronomy, 355-359 Military science, 636-639 Animal husbandry and 690 Buildings. Obviously the switch over to the DDC 22 will put less strain on libraries.

There has been considerable improvement in the manual, now shifted to volume 1 of the print edition (pp. 1-182). Notes in the manual have been shortened by removing redundant information and by dividing them into smaller sections. Some information from the manual has been transferred to the schedules and tables, in the form of notes. The manual is now clearer and easier to read. Flow charts, built-in numbers, and *see also* references should help classifiers achieve greater consistency.

The relative index has been beefed up. With its 928 pages, it is 333 pages longer than the previous one, including new built-in numbers and many additional terms. The entry vocabulary is wide-based and current.

DDC 22, the first edition of this millennium, has kept pace with the fast changing information environment to map and organize it squarely. To quote our friends at OCLC: knowledge is a big world, and they have organized it.

M.P. Satija

Prof. M.P. Satija, GND University, Amritsar 143 005 India. E-mail: satija\_mp@yahoo.com

JÖRGENSEN, Corinne. **Image retrieval: theory and research**. Lanham, MD : Scarecrow Press, 2003. xii, 340 p. ISBN 0-8108-4734-5.

Professor Corinne Jörgensen's book will be useful to researchers, practitioners, and graduate students working in the area of the management of collections of still images. The book is a fine piece of scholarship that is thoroughly researched and nicely written. It integrates information from a number of perspectives, including cognitive psychology and computer science, into an information science text. This work is timely, since images and other nontextual information are forming an ever larger part of the mass of information available to us. Indeed, in the long history of recorded information on our planet, images "were