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Ben Custer

Ben Custer, Editor of the *Dewey Decimal Classification* and Chief of the Decimal Classification Division, Library of Congress, 1956-1980, passed away on January 20, 1997 in Oberlin, Ohio USA. DDC Edition 21 is dedicated to Mr. Custer with a note recognizing his efforts to expand the use and usefulness of classification: "Reaching out to library organizations and users throughout the world, he turned the development of the Dewey Decimal Classification into a worldwide cooperative venture." Those who knew him will remember Ben as a dynamic force in the development of DDC.

Dewey Decimal Classification Activities

No sooner is one edition of DDC put to bed than another is begun. The Dewey Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee (EPC) is currently looking toward Edition 22. In preparation for this the EPC has been conducting a retreat to consider DDC's philosophical underpinnings, structure and scope. The Editor and the Committee are very receptive to comments and new ideas.

Recent activities of the LC Decimal Classification Division were reported on at the ALA Midwinter Meetings in Washington, DC in February 1997. The following is excerpted from the report and updated from the World Wide Website at URL: http://www.oclc.org/fp/ The full report is available at the website.

During the Midwinter Meetings OCLC Forest Press sponsored a highly successful continental breakfast and Dewey update. It was so well received that current plans are to continue the breakfast as a regular event at future ALA Conferences. The programme included two presentations and a question and answer session with the editors. In the first presentation a "Dewey Classification Cutter Project" was described by Ed. O'Neill, OCLC Office of Research. The OCLC Division of Research is currently investigating a process that will provide complete Dewey call numbers (i.e. class numbers with accompanying cutter numbers) to WorldCat, the OCLC Online Union Catalog. The underlying purpose is to provide users with services to help them use the Dewey Decimal Classification on the OCLC system more effectively. The project has two separate components. First, the project will result in the addition of a new field (093) to the USMARC record in order to accommodate the full DDC class number, including cutters and workmarks for all book records with 082 (Dewey Decimal Call Number) or 092 (Locally assigned Dewey Decimal Call Number) fields in WorldCat. In addition, OCLC will provide the Cutter-Sanborn and Three-figure Cutter tables in electronic format, with OCLC-

developed "Cutter-macro" to make it possible to search and retrieve specific cutter numbers. These tables are a revised version of original tables and are designed to be compatible with Cutter tables already in use. It is not planned to produce the tables in an "eye-readable" version at this point, but the revised tables with be included with future versions of *Dewey for Windows*. It is expected that the tables will be made available to all users of OCLC Cataloging Services, including PromptCat, CatCD for Windows, CatME for Windows, as well as online OCLC users. In February this project was under investigation and with appropriate review/approval it could be active in 1997. A brief overview paper, "Dewey Classification Cutter Project" by Linda G. Gabel containing examples was given out at the breakfast meeting and a fuller discussion of the project will be published in the OCLC Office of Research Annual Report.

The second presentation at the breakfast meeting was a demonstration of current version of *Dewey for Windows* by Julianne Beall, Assistant Editor, DDC. Dewey for Windows, a Microsoft Windows™-based version of DDC Edition 21, was issued in August 1996. In February 1997 it was announced that two activities were underway to help classifiers use *Dewey for Windows* more efficiently. An up-graded help system and an online companion book were being produced. The new help system is posted on the Dewey Home page and Users may down-load the upgraded help system and replace the help system issued with the product.

Three other very useful documents were distributed at the breakfast meeting. "New Computer-Related Topics in DDC 21" consists of a list of DDC class numbers, annotated with examples, on topics of electronic publishing, internet, internet with respect to a subject or discipline, internats, Java and the World Wide Web. "Animals and Plants in Aquatic Environments: DDC 21 Guidelines" focuses on the new ecology schedule in 577 designed to bring together the various ecological aspects of specific aquatic environments. For marine environments it brings together the specific ecological aspects of marine environments in specific oceans. It interprets the instructions at class numbers 592-599 and provides examples. "Sexual Harassment in Education" is a one page document which explains the use of DDC in handling this interdisciplinary subject problem with examples. These papers were not found at the website but could be requested using the addresses below.

The Dewey Decimal Classification website has a great deal of very useful information and regular visits to it are highly recommended. Classification workshops are announced there. Also, for example, the DDC Classification Division provides a weekly list of LC Subject Headings/DDC 21 Numbers. This is a