

Conclusion: The UDC has geared up and taken effective steps to meet the challenges of networked information. This has been made possible by organisational remedies and a firm will to survive and thrive. All set on an even keel, it is ready to meet any contingency of the (specialised) information world. Still, there are some challenges to be met, especially in producing a trilingual Standard edition on CD-ROM and in successfully filling the vacant class 4. The *Pocket Edition* has still to incorporate changes in 2 Religion and 61 Medicine, soon to be posted on the UDC web site. Nevertheless, UDC comes up as a system of high quality, easy applicability and international validity. The *Pocket Edition* is a useful and valuable by-product, likely to be translated into other languages.

References and URLs:

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Universal Decimal Classification : International medium edition. Milton Keynes : British Standards Institution, 1993. BS 1000M : 1993.

Universal Decimal Classification : Pocket Edition. [Ed. by Geoffrey Robinson]. London: British Standards Institution, 1999. 288 p. ISBN 0-580-33045-1. DISC PD 1000 : 1999.

URLs of interest :

<http://www.bsi.org.uk/disc>

<http://www.udcc.org>

<http://www.bsi.org.uk>

<http://www.bsi.org.uk/disc>

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Dewey Decimal Classification : Francophone perspectives : Papers from a workshop presented at the General Conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Amsterdam, Netherlands, August 20, 1998. Classification décimale Dewey : perspectives francophones : communications d'un atelier présentées à la Conférence générale de la Fédération Internationale des Associations de Bibliothécaires et de Bibliothèques (IFLA), Amsterdam, Pays-Bas, 20 août 1998. Edited by Julianne Beall and Raymonde Couture-Lafleur. Albany,

NY : Forest Press, 1999. 58 + 60 p. ISBN 0-910608-67-9.

This compact publication includes the five papers presented at a meeting sponsored by the IFLA Section on Classification and Indexing to mark the publication of a French-language version of the 21st edition of the *Dewey Decimal Classification* (DDC21)¹. The purpose of the half-day meeting held at the 1998 IFLA Conference was to “highlight the expertise of French-speaking specialists in this area, examine the impact of the 21st French-language edition of the DDC, and explore the phenomenon of rendering realities specific to one particular cultural environment in a second language” (Foreword, vii).

Louis Cabral, of the Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation (ASTED) in Québec, describes how the project of translating DDC21 came about and evolved in “Developing partnerships : Producing a French-language version of the 21st edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification.” Three national libraries (the National Library of Canada, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec), and a professional association, ASTED, which coordinated the work of all partners, were involved in this important project. As the most recent edition in French of the Dewey classification dated back to 1974, this new work responds to a pressing need for an up-to-date knowledge organization scheme. Cabral reminds us that most of the 13,000 public and school libraries in Canada and Québec are DDC users, and that DDC is recommended for all central lending libraries and for holdings loaned through municipal libraries in France. Furthermore, developing countries have demonstrated an interest in the classification scheme. The project of translating the classification system was conceived in 1991, well before the publication, in 1996, of DDC21 in English; ASTED first focussed on a possible translation of the 12th abridged edition, before redirecting its efforts into a different venture which led to the publication of the very popular *Édition intermédiaire* (Intermediate edition) in 1996², and eventually to a full translation of DDC21. The working team on the most recent project was composed of a scientific committee with representation

1 *Classification décimale Dewey et Index*. 21^{ème} éd. Éditée par Joan S. Mitchell, éditeur, (...) et al.; version française sous la coordination de Raymonde Couture-Lafleur et Louis Cabral. Montréal : ASTED, 1999. 4 vols. ISBN 2-921548-38-0.

2 *Classification décimale de Dewey*. Éd. intermédiaire. Montréal : ASTED, 1994. 2 vols. ISBN 2-921548-11-9.

from each partner, an overall management coordinator, and a project leader/editor with responsibility for the translation.

Raymonde Couture-Lafleur, project leader and general editor, provides a behind-the-scene look at the project, explaining the decision-making process and describing the many problems that had to be overcome. In "The French translation of the Dewey Decimal Classification: the making of a DDC translation," she speaks of some hard choices: what software to use, what hardware to consider most appropriate, what categories of personnel to involve. The most important decisions made early in the project related to the most suitable strategy for a venture of this kind: should the process be one of translation or of adaptation, was a scientific committee necessary and if so, who would be on it and what would its mandate be, what was the best way to organize and distribute the work? Although it was eventually decided that a translation rather than an adaptation would be produced, some critical modifications were brought to the structure anyway: divisions 370 (Education) and 340 (Law) were adapted to better represent different educational and legal systems, and the sections on French and Quebec history were augmented. Problems arose in dealing with the translators who had been selected on the basis of their knowledge of the subject matter they were dealing with, but were not familiar with the structure of a tool such as Dewey and did not always understand the necessity of language standardization. Another set of problems arose in the delivery of word processed texts; the project team had to live with its early decision to use a word-processor rather than database management software to process data. Explaining how translated texts had to be vetted by one or more members of the scientific committee, Madame Lafleur describes the inconvenience of such a physical distance between members of the committee working in France and those working in Quebec (it is interesting to note that these problems are also emphasized in the paper authored by the French work team). Along the way, the internal consistency of the final product became a real concern; the editor candidly reveals her surprise at discovering that, even in such a controlled environment as a classification scheme, there still appears to be more than one French language.

This second text touches more on the administrative part of the work than on the conceptual aspect of it. Its author's description of how such a large project was in fact conducted, and of how it should have been conducted, will sound familiar to all of us who have lived through similar situations.

The strongest and most interesting contribution to this document is that made by Bruno Béguet, Suzanne Jouguelet and Max Naudi, all of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, in "Translating the Dewey Decimal Classification into French: Assessment and perspectives on the scientific contribution by the Bibliothèque nationale de France." This paper is stronger in that it addresses conceptual issues, and it is more realistic in its assessment of the limitations of DDC21 in French: "linguistic accuracy is one thing, but the issue of social contexts that differ from one French-speaking country to another is something else altogether; even though we attempted to make the vocabulary take the overall French-language context into account, the fact remained that Belgian, Swiss or African users would not necessarily see all of their own specificities reflected in the text" (p. 17).

The mandate assigned to the BNF was essentially to proofread what had already been translated, to verify the accuracy of the vocabulary, to correct usage, and to monitor content quality; the French team was not allowed to develop adaptations. The French authors provide many details on the methodology, emphasizing how difficult it was to work with hard-copy rather than with electronic files. They offer a revealing inventory of specific translation problems originating, according to them, in the fact that the source language was not itself common but rather standardized language (let's note in passing that some of the supposedly "bad translations" offered as examples are actually valid ones: "plant pests," for example, is not the English equivalent of "plantes nuisibles," as the French would have it (p. 21), but rather of "parasites des plantes"). The French team also deplored the overall emphasis on representing Anglo-saxon society, of which Québec is indeed a lot closer to than France.

The interest of this particular paper, which is more researched than the other ones, resides in the many examples that it provides. The co-authors offer a brief overview of some problematic disciplines and range of numbers that will be of interest to anybody concerned with issues relating to the organization and sharing of information in multilingual and multicultural contexts:

- 1) division 370 (Education) exhibits the greatest number of cases of inexact equivalence between concepts across cultures and languages, as well as cases of non equivalence. Noting that education is a very strong part of national identity, the authors question the international character of the DDC, noting that "adjusting vocabulary is easier than dealing with structural differences" (p. 25);

- 2) in 944 (French history) and T2 -44 (Geographic subdivisions for France), extra numbers have already been developed in France from existing ones. The authors think however that this does not yet go far enough in representing the historical and geographical realities of their country and civilization;
- 3) conceptual and terminological problems are so prevalent in 340 (Law) that Béguet, Jouguelet and Naudi declare this part of the schedule irrelevant to the French legal system. The authors compare the process of integrating French legal concepts into the existing structure to trying to fit "well-defined objects into improperly shaped slots" (p. 29). 346 (Civil Law) does not allow for classification of the general subject or of its specific structure (people, property, obligations, etc.) Administrative law is too vastly dispersed. The authors offer suggestions as to how many problems relating to the coverage of the law of most countries could be solved in the DDC. The French team obviously resents the fact that the many suggestions made were not integrated in the final version of DDC21 in French, and denounces inconsistencies in decisions made by the editor.

In "French Dewey: potential influence in development of the DDC," Julianne Beall describes the types of changes that are practical for such a system as Dewey. Having explained how changes in class numbers hurt libraries that don't have the money to reclassify, Beall suggests ways of updating the schedules with minimal damage on that front: prefer simple expansions, avoid complete revision of parts of the schedule, avoid reusing a class number with a different meaning. She sees copy cataloguing across linguistic boundaries as "a compelling reason to keep [the] different language editions similar" (p. 36) to the original English one and to each other. The author describes the mechanisms of cooperation between the DDC editorial committee and national libraries or professional associations, with particular emphasis on the production of the French version of DDC 21. In what appears as a response to the preceding paper, Beall explains why a complete revision of T2 -44 is not deemed warranted at this time; she does, however, stress the fact that changes to the geographical tables are being discussed with French specialists. She also addresses the many problems around the representation of the legal domain, admitting that "the rationale is that Roman Law and Common Law systems are so different that no one law schedule can serve both adequately" (p. 43).

Annie Béthery, in "Teaching the DDC in French: the Université de Paris X-Nanterre experience" provides a long description of the various stages of training for a library career in France; all of us who have been through this type of training and those of us who now train others will not find anything particularly novel or even interesting in this description. The paper becomes more engaging when Béthery reminds us that DDC was introduced in France, relatively late in the history of the classification, following the implementation of policies designed to increase reading among citizens. The author explains how she conceived what was to become the widely popular *Édition abrégée* (Abridged edition) when she found herself having to simultaneously classify and index a large collection, and teach professionals to do this work without the help of French-language tools. The *Édition abrégée*³ has kept abreast of changes in the full edition of DDC, and it is now used in nearly all municipal and departmental libraries, in school and college documentation and information centres, and at the Bibliothèque nationale.

Dewey Decimal Classification: Francophone perspectives will be entertaining reading for anyone interested in the history and the development of the classification scheme. The reader must know, however, that all papers included are structured around anecdotes rather than around theoretical or even practical proposals relating to the development of multilingual and multicultural knowledge representation tools, and that it adds little to the existing literature in this area.

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SOSIŃSKA-KALATA, Barbara. **Modele organizacji wiedzy w systemach wyszukiwania informacji o dokumentach.** [Models of knowledge organization in documentary information retrieval systems]. Warszawa : Wydawnictwo SBP, 1999. 387 p. ISBN 83-97629-22-7.

The latest work of Dr. Barbara Sosińska-Kalata (the preceding great work of this author was an extensive

3 Béthery, Annie. *Abrégé de la Classification décimale de Dewey*. Nouvelle éd. à partir de la XXI^e éd. intégrale en langue anglaise. Paris : Cercle de la Librairie, 1998. 317 p. ISBN 2-76540-682-0.