

COMAROMI John P. (Ed.), Beall, J., Matthews, W.E., Jr., New, G.R. (Assist.Eds.): **Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index. Devised by Melvil Dewey. Ed.20.** 4 vols. Albany, N.Y. Forest Press. OCLC 1989. LXi,514 + XX,944 + VII,864 + VII,961p. ISBN 0-910608-37-7

A new edition of a classification adopted world wide by 200,000 cities in 135 countries is always a celebrated and exciting event. A new edition of the DDC has always created a bit of a stir in the library profession and the library press. It is a result of intensive and wide deliberations and work of ten years by classification specialists, teachers, library users and expert committees from USA, Canada, and the UK.

DDC-20 released in January 1989 comprises 3378 pages in four volumes. The schedules earlier in vol.2 have now been put into two vols. (2-3) for the convenience of physical handling and ease of referring to – otherwise there is nothing of unusual increase on the part of the schedules. However, DDC-20 brings in many more changes compared with the last two editions (18 and 19) published in 1971 and 1979 respectively. Outstanding changes with many implications and potentialities for trend setting have occurred in its administration. Since August 1988, its publishers, the Forest Press at Albany, a subsidiary of the Lake Placid Club Educational Foundation established by Melvil Dewey in 1896, has been owned by and incorporated into the famous OCLC Online Computer Library Centre at Dublin, Ohio. It marks a new era for its testing and use in online retrieval systems begun by the research work of Dr. Karen Markey DRABENSTOTT. As another change, it is the first edition produced by a new editor, Dr. John P. COMAROMI who took over in 1980 from Benjamin A. CUSTER who retired after editing four (16-19) highly successful editions from 1956 to 1979. J.P. Comaromi has been associated with the DDC since long in various capacities: his doctoral research on the history of the DDC completed in 1969 at Michigan University and his serving as the chairperson of the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee (DCEPC) from 1976 to 1979. By inclination a philosopher and a scholar, Comaromi believes in constant and drastic revision of the system to keep equal pace with growth and changing structure of knowledge. However, the new edition toeing the line of the preceding edition maintains, as if diplomatically, a delicate balance between stability and need to change.

As another administrative change, the Editor of the DDC, until December 1986 also headed the Decimal Classification Division (DCD) of the Library of Congress. It is at this office where the DDC is constantly applied to almost 100,000 books annually, and changes are formulated and tested by the DCD, the laboratory of the DDC being at the same time the single largest user of this system. Since January 1987, headship of the Division and editorship of the DDC have been separated. David A. SMITH is now the head of the Division. In June 1985, Peter J. PAULSON succeeded John A. HUMPHRY as Executive Director of Forest Press. As a great tribute to his work, this 20th edition has been dedicated to John Ames Humphry with the citation "Gentleman and

Leader". In 1986, Lois Mai CHAN took over as chairperson of the DCEPC from Margaret E. COCKSHUTT of Toronto whose tenure had been from 1980 to 1985.

As another far reaching change, for the first time in library history, a library classification has been edited and produced on a micro computer system called – in this case – Editorial Support System (ESS) installed in 1986; and a DDC database has been created. It is the first edition generated from an online database. Programming was done by John J. FINNI and Cora M. ARSENAULT from Inforonics, Inc. (USA), commissioned by Forest Press in 1984. ESS has come as a great help in editorial revisions. Revisions, additions, deletions, relocations of numbers and headings can now be done instantly. The ability to construct, edit, modify, and develop classification systems through interaction with a computer database has many advantages. It makes possible the rapid finding of all uses of any DDC number or its verbal description from the schedules or any of the seven tables. A major advantage is the ease and rapidity of printing draft schedules for review by the editorial staff and for DCEPC, and for final printing. It will have enormous implications on publications, namely frequency, cost and format. From the publisher's point of view the classification is now always in standing type readily amenable to alternations of any magnitude here and there: always minutely up-to-date and always ready for timely publication. By this way the time for its physical production has been reduced to one-fourth only. Soon the system will be made available online and in CD-ROM versions. A MARC authority format is being actively developed at the Library of Congress.

In the new edition, as usual, the changes in contents are concerning expansions, deletions, and relocations of old classes, and additions of a few new ones. As a major development, a completely new schedule (DDC-20 avoids the term phoenix schedule) for 780 Music as been incorporated. This schedule had been prepared outside the Decimal Classification Division of the LC by British experts in 1980 and had been widely circulated for opinions of users and teachers before its final inclusion. The process took ten years. It portends a welcome trend in broad-based revisions – a laudable policy which seems to have been borrowed from the UDC. Other major revisions of 570 Life Sciences and 370 Education will now probably be included in DDC-21. The 20th edition also incorporates schedules for 004-006 Data Processing and Computer Science, and 301-307 Sociology, both schedules already issued as separates since the publication of DDC-19. Minor changes have taken place for class numbers of Christian Religion, Television, Adult Education, Electronics, Civil Rights, Gymnastics, and Central American History. However, no special efforts have been made to reduce the American and Christian bias in the system. Geographic area numbers have been modernised corresponding to the political and administrative changes throughout the world since the last decade. Accordingly changes have been made in the area numbers for British Columbia, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland, Germany and Belgium.

Some of the important changes have occurred in the other tables too, especially in Table 3, Subdivisions for Individual Literatures... (p.389-414, Vol.1). Now, instead of two, the DDC has three subtables: 3-A, 3-B, and 3-C, the latter being in fact a subsubtable as it is mostly to be used when instructed in Table 3-B and to some extent also in 808-809. This further furcation makes its applications direct and simplified.

Format and presentation of the text has been improved in elegance and operation. The three major summaries have been relocated to the second volume. Moreover, throughout the text there are more multilevel summaries especially in dense schedules such as 620 Engineering, 630 Agriculture, 370 Education. Multilevel summaries are provided for eight major divisions and for the Area Table for Europe and North America. With such multilevel summaries, the structure of the entire class can be seen at one glance. In locating numbers, this is time saving, and subjects the schedules to a less flipping of pages and thus to less wear and tear.

Under each entry copious definitional, scope and instructional notes have been appended. Centered headings are now flagged typographically by the symbol in the number column. Optional numbers are given in parentheses, e.g., Indian English literature (828.9935).

The *Manual on the Use of the DDC* (Forest Press, 1982) has been incorporated into the DDC (Vol.4, p.731-968) and is referred to at the appropriate headings. The manual is the blue book of the policies and interpretations of the DDC at the Decimal Classification Division. With its many maps and flow charts it is a unique and laudable feature of the DDC. Also, it comes as a handy guide to the classifiers. Since in every classification system, class numbers are liable to varying interpretations, such an official manual will promote uniformity in the use of the system in different libraries throughout the world.

In order to meet the long standing demand of the users especially outside the English speaking world, the Editor's introduction has notably been made simple and brief. "This Introduction is written primarily for the novice or beginning classifiers, although the experienced classifier may benefit from reviewing its contents" (Introduction, 1.1). The entire Editor's Introduction (I, p.XXV-1) has been divided into small sections with feature headings and section numbers. It has added to the convenience of referring to the instructions.

Its index, an integral part of the system, and acknowledged as Dewey's other innovating contribution to library science, has now been substantially trimmed from 1216 pages in DDC-19 to only 730 in DDC-20. This has been accomplished without impairing its efficiency. It is a result of intensive research that had been undertaken by the editor and his team on the use and retrieval efficiency of the relative index of the DDC. All "see" references have been replaced by direct entries, e.g., by looking at both "birds" and "aves" one reaches 598. Also, synthesised number abundantly present in the DDC-19 index, have been axed restricting it as an index to terminology of the schedules. Abbreviations occurring in all of the seven tables have been replaced by their number, e.g.,

ss, and area in the index of DDC-19 are now replaced by T1 and T2 respectively. The advantage is obvious.

The new edition on permanent paper and in maroon buckram binding is attractive to look at and comparatively easy to use. The size of the pages has been a bit reduced by lessening margins on all sides thus leaving little space for personal notes on the margin. Many librarians will regret this. J.Comaromi has furthered the tradition of innovation and user's convenience set by the illustrious predecessor B.A.Custer, now Editor Emeritus.

The DDC will play its role also in the information society of the 21st century with envisaged less paper libraries. Maybe, DDC-21 is amongst the first few important events of the library and information world at the beginning of the 21st century. In that case the symbolism may not merely be a coincidence. It will reflect its manifested urge to live through adaptability, and to serve the users by embracing needed modernization.

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SHARMA, Pandey S.K.: **Universe of Knowledge and Research Methodology**. Delhi: Ken Publication 1990. XII, 165p.

Knowledge is librarian's stock-in-trade. The study of the nature of knowledge is as important to an information scientist as the study of anatomy to a surgeon. Its implications in information handling are too numerous. S.R.Ranganathan is a pioneer in the studies on modes of knowledge growth. In the year 1948 Ranganathan developed and got introduced a course entitled "Developments and Structure of the Universe of Subjects" in the master degree curriculum of the University of Delhi. He had an abiding interest in this field, and always delved deep into it obtaining fresh results. His announced book on the subject, however, was never published. The work has been continued by his schoolmen at DRTC, Bangalore and elsewhere. The late Professor Jesse H.Shera (1903-1982) lauds this as Ranganathan's everlasting "intellectual contribution to the underlying philosophy of librarianship"¹. Ranganathan still dominates the Indian library school curricula both in contents and influence. Almost all Indian library schools have introduced the paper "Universe of Knowledge" clubbed with "Research Methodology" to make out of this a full length course for the master degree curriculum. Over the years the spirit and objectives of the paper have got clouded and many colleagues now disparagedly differ on the contents of this paper. Student do not know what exactly they are to learn; what sort of questions will be put to them; and, what will subsequently help them in their information work. Consequently, four books²⁻⁵ written on the subject in India vary from history of scholarship to the history and growth of various disciplines, even to the anthropological evolution of man and culture since prehistoric times. The situation has not become very clear despite the