

Chapter Four

DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION

By Tolera G.

- Melvil Louis Kossuth Dewey is the full name of the designer of the classification scheme which is popularly known as Dewey Decimal Classification.
- When he was as acting Librarian at Amherst College during 1872, realized the importance of 'library' and urgent need to reorganize the library.

- He conceived the idea of 'classification of books' and also observed that the method of **shelf arrangement of books** that was in use at that time caused frequent shifting of books, low efficiency in case of retrieval of documents and wasteful expenditure of time and money.

- These factors led him to develop a simple scheme, which would be helpful and suitable to all kinds of libraries to be used throughout the world.

- As a result of his study of various libraries and having made personal visits to various American libraries, in 1876 he published in the “Library Journal” anonymously a work entitled,” **A classification and Subject Rules for Catalogue and Arranging the Books and pamphlets of a Library”.**

- ❑ DDC is also available in abridged form to meet the needs of small libraries.

Different between LCC and DDC

The Library of Congress Classification (LCC)

The LCC is a system of library classification developed by the Library of Congress. It is used by most research and academic libraries in the U.S. and several other countries, for example, Australia and [Taiwan, R.O.C.](#). It is not to be confused with the Library of Congress Subject Headings or [Library of Congress Control Number](#). Most public libraries and small academic libraries continue to use the [Dewey Decimal Classification](#) (DDC).

Listed below are the letters and titles of the main classes of the Library of Congress Classification.

Letter	Subject area
A	<u>General Works</u>
B	<u>Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion</u>
C	<u>Auxiliary Sciences of History</u>
D	<u>General and Old World History</u>
E	<u>History of America</u>
F	<u>History of the United States and British, Dutch, French , and Latin America</u>
G	<u>Geography, Anthropology, and Recreation</u>
H	<u>Social Sciences</u>
J	<u>Political Science</u>
K	<u>Law</u>
L	<u>Education</u>
M	<u>Music</u>
N	<u>Fine Arts</u>
P	<u>Language and Literature</u>
Q	<u>Science</u>
R	<u>Medicine</u>
S	<u>Agriculture</u>
T	<u>Technology</u>
U	<u>Military Science</u>
V	<u>Naval Science</u>
Z	<u>Bibliography, Library Science, and General Information Resources</u>

Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDC)

The DDC attempts to organize all knowledge into [ten main classes](#). The ten main classes are each further subdivided into ten divisions, and each division into ten sections, giving ten main classes, 100 divisions and 1000 sections. DDC's advantage in using [decimals](#) for its categories allows it to be purely numerical, while the drawback is that the codes are much longer and more difficult to remember as compared to an alphanumeric system.

Classes listed

- The system is made up of seven tables and ten main classes, each of which are divided into ten secondary classes or subcategories, each of which contain ten subdivisions.
- The tables are:
 - standard subdivision
 - areas
 - subdivision of individual literatures
 - subdivisions of individual languages
 - racial, ethnic, national groups
 - languages
 - persons

The classes are:

- [000 – Computer science, information and general works](#)
- [100 – Philosophy and psychology](#)
- [200 – Religion](#)
- [300 – Social sciences](#)
- [400 – Language](#)
- [500 – Science](#) (including mathematics)
- [600 – Technology and applied Science](#)
- [700 – Arts and recreation](#)
- [800 – Literature](#)
- [900 – History, geography, and biography](#)

A few differences between LCC and DDC:

- (1) LCC uses both letters and numbers, while DDC only uses numbers.
- (2) They have different filing rules. DDC numbers file like decimal fractions (e.g., 009 before 010), while the numbers after the initial letters of an LCC number file like integers: QA9 files before QA10. This makes it a little more difficult to program computers to file LCC numbers.
- (3) LCC is a complete shelf-listing system as well as classification system, so (following its rules, together with using the LC shelf-list) you can get a complete call number for an item. DDC only gives you a number for the subject, and you need to add something to that to get a number for a specific book (and what you add will vary from library to library).

4.2 Hierarchical Structure

- DDC is a hierarchical scheme which proceeds from the general to the specific.
- It considers knowledge as unity and divides into Main Classes, Sub-Classes, Sub-Sub-Classes etc., based on certain characteristics.

4.3 Relative Location

- ❑ Dewey introduced the concept of relative location as opposed to fixed location.
- ❑ He developed a notational system consisting of Indo-Arabic numerals used as decimal fractions.
- ❑ According to the relative location a new book on those subjects can be inserted in the middle of an existing sequence as indicated by the notation.

4.4 Simplicity

- ❖ In Decimal Classification by its hierarchical structure the notation is very simple to understand as it conveys more clearly the structure of the notation, and at the same time it is very hospitable and flexible.

4.5 Synthesis

- Basically the DDC was brought out, as an enumerative scheme of classification. But from the 16th edition onwards it slowly began to adopt the facet structure.
- It adopted many devices for the synthesis of notation like the use of Tables, Subject device and other instructions adding from one table to other, adding tables to schedules, within the schedules etc.,

4.6 Schedules

Each Main Class consists of Ten divisions, 0-9. These division numbers occupy the record position in notation, for example:

- 600 Technology
- 610 Medicine
- 620 Technology

Further, each division of the Main Class is further divided in to **ten sections**, also numbered 0-9.

- 610 Medicine
- 611 Human Anatomy
- 612 Human Physiology
- 613 General and Personal Hygiene
- 614 Public Health and related topics
- 615 Pharmacology & therapeutics
- 616 Diseases
- 617 Surgery
- 618 Other branches of medicine
- 619 Experimental Medicine

A decimal point is placed between third and fourth digit. Thus, 636 Animal Husbandry is divided into:

- 636.1 Horses
- 636.2 Cattle
- 636.3 Sheep etc.
- 636.1 Horses is further divided as
- 636.11 Oriental Horses
- 636.12 Race Horses
- 636.16 Pomies etc.

4.7 Mnemonic Features

- **The term mnemonics** stands for those symbols of notation which serves as' **aids to the memory**'.
- Those symbols represent the same idea, whenever it appears.
- Dewey also used mnemonics at several places in DDC, representing the same meaning.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, has identified 4 types of mnemonics, which are generally used in many schemes of classification.

- Alphabetical mnemonics
- Scheduled mnemonics
- Systematic mnemonics
- Seminal mnemonics

In DDC 19th edition onwards, the first three kinds of mnemonics are used widely. **Examples:**

a). Alphabetical Mnemonics:

In DDC 19th Edition

- **Political Parties & Specific countries 329.1-329.9**
- Congress Party in India is 329.54
CON

b). Scheduled Mnemonics:

- **312.260481** Statistics of deaths caused due to Gynecological diseases.
- Here **Add note** is there.
- Add to 312.2604 the number following 61 in 616-618' where the number for Gynecology is 618.1

c) Systematic Mnemonics:

- The application of scheduled mnemonics helps in attaining consistency in the order of subjects. This will give systematic sequence.

4.8 Tables:

- **Table 1** **Standard Sub-divisions**
- **Table 2** **Areas**
- **Table 3** **Subdivisions of Individual**
 Literatures
- **Table 4** **Subdivisions of Individual**
 Languages.
- **Table 5** **Racial, Ethnic and**
 groups
- **Table 6** **Languages**
- **Table 7** **Persons**

Table 1 Standard Sub-divisions

Table 1 Standard Sub-divisions: Sub-divisions will be 0-9. Notation of this table can be added directly to any number from the schedules, or follow the instruction given under each main Class. Usually

.1 - .9

.01 - .09

.001 - .009

.0001 - .0009

.Within the Main Class number.

In **Standard Sub-division Table**

01 Theory and Philosophy

02 Miscellaneous

03 Dictionaries, Encyclopedia and Concordances

04 General applicability

05 Serials

06 Organizations

07 Study and teaching

08 Collections

09 General geography and history

- Example: Serials on Applied Sciences 605
(5 for Serials).

Table 2 Areas

- **Table 2 Areas**: Here also 0 – 9 numbers will be there. To add any geographical area to any main classes we have to add 09 and the result ,follow the instruction given in that main class.
-
- Example: Internal relations of America 372.73

Continent wise arranged in the Table 2.

➤-4 European continent

➤-44 France

➤-45 Italy

➤-5 Asia

➤-54 India

Table 3 Subdivision of Individual Literature

Table 3 Subdivision of Individual

Literature: Numbers 0 – 9. This notation will be used for the Main Class 800 only. Specific literature numbers 810-890.

- Example:
- .1 Poetry
- .2 Drama
- .3 Fiction

Example:

- English Fiction 823

Table 4 Subdivision of Individual Languages

Table 4 Subdivision of Individual Languages: Numbers 0 – 9. Like Table-3 here also specific languages. We can these 0 – 9 to any language.

- **Example:**
- -15 Phonology
- -152 Spelling and Pronunciation

Example:

- English Phonology 421.5

Table 5 Racial, Ethnic and National Groups

Table 5 Racial, Ethnic and National Groups: Numbers 0 – 9. This Table enumerates the notations for different races, ethnical and national groups of different people in the world.

- -1 North Americans
- -11 Canadians
- -31 Germans etc.

Table 6 Languages

- **Table 6 Languages:** Numbers 0 – 9.
- The use of this Table is restricted only to those numbers from the schedules and other Tables wherein the classifier is specifically instructed.

Table 7 Persons

Table 7 Persons: Numbers 0 – 9.

- **Example:**
- -33 Economists
- -34 Lawyers etc.
- These notation can be added either directly, or on the basis of instruction or with Standard sub-division -024 specific types of users.
- **Example:**
- Economics for lawyers 330.2434

4.9 Relative Index

- This forms vol.3 of the DDC. The index contains an entry for every significant term named in the schedules and tables.
- It brings all the related terms of the subject at one place scattered in the schedules.
- DDC has its own merits to shelve the documents on racks in the information centers in a helpful sequence.

- The index is considered as a very important part of work.
- The index is considered as 'relative index' because of its inverse relations to the schedules.
- Relative index of DDC helps the classifier to locate the given topic in the schedule and tables.

To reduce the volume of DDC, said to be enumerative scheme, Dewey has introduced a few tables which led to synthesise the number.

These **synthetic devices** may be categorized as:

- Add from tables;
- Add from schedules
- Add from both tables and schedules; and
- Special topics of general applicability.

4.10 Merits of DDC

❖ **Usefulness:** the important feature of the DDC is that its notation provides a universal language, that can be understood in all information centers, and even in all countries, as it is used 1-9 Indo-Arabic numerals.

❖ **Versatility and Flexibility:**

Another valuable feature of Dewey is the adaptability of its notation to the needs of information centers of different sizes and natures.

- ❖ This is, a small or a large information center can reduce the length of base numbers, according to its versatility.

4.11 Demerits

Besides the number of merits, Dewey also criticized for some demerits.

- ❑ The sequence of **main classes** and the **collocation of other sub-divisions** are considered to be arbitrary and illogical.
- ❑ **Example:** separation of Languages (400) and from Literature (800)
- ❑ Social Sciences (300) from Geography & History (900).
- ❑ Political Science (320) from Public Administration (350)

- Commerce (380) from Economics (330) and Business Management (650)
- Sociology (301-307) from Customs (390) and social Welfare (360) and on...

Another reason is **Anglo-American bias** in culture, language, literature, religion as the scheme was **originated from America.**

HANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTI

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