Library of Congress
Classification for the
Academic Library

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Gabriel Naudé, as early as 1627, advised on the arrangement of books in a library as follows:

The seventh point . . . is that of the Order andDisposition which Books ought to observe in a Library; . . . for without this, doubtless, all inquiring is to no purpose, and our labour fruitless; seeing Books are for no other reason laid and reserved in this place, but that they may be serviceable upon such occasions as present themselves; Which thing it is notwithstanding impossible to effect, unless they be ranged, and disposed according to the variety of their subjects, or in such other sort, as that they may easily be found, as soon as named. I affirm, moreover, that without this Order and disposition, be the collection of Books whatever, were it of fifty thousand volumes, it would no more merit the name of a Library, than an assembly of thirty thousand men the name of an Army, unlesse they be martially in their several quarters, under the conduct of their Chiefs and Captains; or a vast heap of stones and materials, that of a Palace or a house, till they be placed and put together according to rule, to make a perfect and accomplished structure.¹

Three hundred years later classification of books is still a live subject, and largely for the same reason: "that they [the books] may be serviceable upon such occasions as present themselves".

Though it is a live subject, and one of the most powerful tools in libraries, it is surprising how little seems to have been published—considering its long history—on book classification, how little has been published on the Library of Congress classification, how very little on L.C. classification in the academic library, and how very, very little on "L.C. Classification in the Modern Academic Library."

I like to believe that the Library of Congress classification had its beginning at the University of Wisconsin. Mr. J.C.M. Hanson, cataloguer at the University of Wisconsin 1893-1897, reported on its beginning as follows:
During several informal discussions on classification and notation which I had about 1896 with Miss Olive Jones, librarian of Ohio State University Library, the defects of both the D.C. and the E.C. were gone over quite thoroughly. We were both agreed that a new classification with a notation representing a compromise between the two would be desirable, especially for colleges and university libraries. As for notation, we had in mind one or two letters to indicate classes, subdivisions to be indicated by numerals, either in regular or decimal sequence.

In 1897, therefore, when confronted by the necessity of submitting plans for a classification for the Library of Congress, the rough sketches drawn up in 1895-1896 were again brought out and expanded. Fortunately, the Library of Congress had secured, about this time, the services of Charles Martel, the present chief of the Catalog Division. Mr. Martel was in sympathy with the simplified notation suggested and the main work of developing both notation and schedules was assigned to him. It is mainly due to his indefatigable zeal and interest that the classification developed as it did during the next fifteen years.²

After leaving the Library of Congress, Mr. Hanson, at the University of Chicago, worked with the L.C. classification for many years. Based on this additional experience with it, he wrote, "The advantages have seemed to outweigh the disadvantages to such an extent that personally I have no hesitation in recommending the adoption of the L.C. classification for college libraries, large and small, as against any other system in the field."³

We now have L.C. classification at the University of Wisconsin. Our own experience in changing to it is so recent, and it has been such an absorbing experience, that perhaps I have failed to see the woods for the trees in including in this paper such a full report of a single institution. It may seem from these opening remarks that the title of this paper should be: "The Library of Congress Classification in One Academic Library."

In 1953, when classification became a very important topic with most of us in the University of Wisconsin Library, we had just moved from very crowded quarters in a building which we shared with the State Historical Society to a new University Library building. Cataloguing was being done centrally for eleven department and school libraries on the campus and for several reference collections within the new library as well as for the general collection. There were in the new building ten floors of stacks and, in the basement, stacks providing compact storage for half a million books. The libraries contained about 800,000 accessioned volumes, of which 50,000 were uncatalogued. The cataloguing staff had not increased with the book budget and preparations for moving to the new library (including a series of projects which required almost the entire time of most of
the cataloguers and many of the clerical staff) had taken priority over regular cataloguing—hence the backlog. The 50,000 uncatalogued books were not unavailable, however, for a multiple slip system was used so that on the day a book reached the Catalog Department a card was placed in the Public Catalog supplement and the book was passed on to the Circulation Department. The volumes could circulate, and indeed a great many of them did circulate.

For some time we had wanted to change to a different classification system. Wisconsin was using the Cutter Expansive Classification. In 1893 Cutter's system was chosen over Dewey's because the notation was more elastic and it seemed likely that Cutter's seventh classification, then in the making, would profit from some of the errors of Dewey, and that it would be more modern and more scientifically developed. At the time the Cutter Expansive system was chosen for Wisconsin, the first six classifications for small and medium libraries were printed with an index covering all six classifications. The seventh, planned for the large library, was not yet finished. Unfortunately for Wisconsin it was never finished, and the Cutter Expansive Classification, which continued to be used until 1954, was a combination of the 6th, with the index to the first six classifications, and part of the 7th with an index to each class used. Some classes of the 7th were printed too late for Wisconsin to adopt, or so it seemed to the cataloguers, since they had already expanded parts of the 6th. Miss Eliza Lamb, who worked with Mr. Hanson at Chicago and became head of the Catalog Department at Wisconsin in 1930, described the work of expanding the 6th classification as follows:

The librarian usually made an outline based on the best available authorities. This was referred to an expert in the field, generally a member of the faculty. The results have not always been continuously pleasing, even to those responsible. Such was the case for the Botany scheme which was criticized adversely by the very professor who had worked it out, he having forgotten his connection with it.¹

Mr. Hanson remained at Wisconsin four years only, but within that period he discovered that the classification was far from perfect:

Four years with the Expansive Classification convinced me that no mistake had been made by the University of Wisconsin in selecting the Expansive in preference to the D.C. classification. However, the irregular sequence of letters, the preliminary numbers for form classes, and other features, combined with the slow progress in furnishing additional schedules, proved a serious disadvantage.²

Forty years after Cutter classification was adopted at Wisconsin, Miss Lamb published an explanation and a defense of it:

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The Expansive notation has been criticized as cumbersome, but there has been little if any trouble .... Although the younger generation has the reputation of being unfamiliar with the alphabetical sequence, books are both found and shelved with ease .... [It] has proved adequate to the required amplification of passing years, avoiding the labor and expense of reclassification which has been found necessary for many libraries adopting other classifications before that of the Library of Congress was available.

But twenty years later, in 1953, the number of volumes catalogued per year had trebled, the staff had increased considerably, the revising time required taxed the abilities of the staff. There was little time for the research, study, contemplation, and experimentation necessary for the expansion of many of the classes, the placing of new subjects, and the new approaches to old subjects. There was little time for the instruction needed for the new and inexperienced cataloguers. For the most part they had not heard of the Cutter Expansive Classification. To most of them "Cutter" meant only "Cutter author tables." There were many inconveniences—for example we had only three copies of the classification. We spent years trying to locate copies of the 6th and 7th classifications, finally finding someone who had a small stock for sale. Negotiations were quickly underway but when the signatures were received and checked against our copies we could use less than one-fourth of the pages. The rest of it had to be typed, the equivalent of two rather large volumes.

Not only in the Catalog Department but throughout the library there was dissatisfaction with Cutter, particularly among the new staff members. Faculty members who had studied in other research libraries had become familiar with and recognized the merits of the Library of Congress classification. New faculty members were completely unfamiliar with Cutter. When at last we were settled in our new building, it seemed a propitious time to change from Cutter, particularly with 50,000 volumes awaiting cataloguing. We were not only willing, but in fact eager, to give up Cutter in spite of its good, enduring qualities.

There was one factor which deterred us from deciding immediately in favor of the Library of Congress classification: the notation. Both Cutter and L.C. consist of combinations of letters and figures. What confusion there would be if the classification could not be recognized as one or the other! Cutter class numbers, as assigned at the University of Wisconsin, consist of a combination of from one to five letters. Wherever there is a geographical division, the letters are followed by figures (used decimally). L.C. class numbers consist of one or two letters only, followed by figures 1 to 9999 (used as integers). In practice, with no exceptions, Cutter class numbers had been written as one line (both letters and figures) except when there were more than four letters. Only then were figures which followed the letters
written on a second line. L.C. class numbers would not have more than four letters—in fact, not more than two. The figures which follow the letters could always be written on the second line. Thus the problem was resolved very easily! Sufficient differentiation was provided to guard against confusion. To forestall any misunderstanding that might possibly occur, and to help the Circulation Department, we planned to stamp every University card, which included a Cutter call number, with the word "Cutter" below the call number.

The second problem which we had to consider was: Assuming that L.C. classification is the best existing classification for this library, is it enough better than Cutter for us to give up Cutter for it? The weaknesses and advantages of Cutter were well known to all of us. The literature for L.C. classification was examined for criticisms and reports of experience of other libraries. The familiar arguments in its favor, occurring over and over again in the literature, are, in part, as follows:

Comprehensiveness
Particularity (topics are logical subdivisions of general subjects)
Expansiveness
Flexibility
Practicality
Simplicity of notation
Individuality (made for L.C., for an actual collection of books, a very large collection)
Adaptability

Each main schedule is preceded by a synopsis
There are tables which permit of very precise classifying, particularly the "floating" geographical tables in Class H
There is an index to each schedule
Classifiers who made the classification and who revise it are competent classifiers
It is a "close" classification

Since Library of Congress is behind it, there is reasonable assurance that it will be kept up to date; also that the schedules, printed as government documents, will be reasonably priced.

It undergoes continuous amplification in those fields in which there is a concentration of material.

Printed schedules are reprinted with additions and changes added
Printed schedules are revised
Additions and changes are distributed quarterly

Class numbers are printed on L.C. cards in the majority of cases.
Notation is elastic
Each class is printed as a separate book, Language and Literature (Class P) in several volumes
L.C. list of subject headings can be used as an index, in lieu of an index

Not many general adverse criticisms were found. As Palmer has said "The Library of Congress classification has been approached with a certain measure of restraint." Typical of the unfavorable comments found are those from Mann:

No directions for its use
As yet, no complete index
Lack of mnemonic features
The magnitude of the scheme

and from Bliss:

Order of main classes unscientific and uneconomical
Five letters unused, but many important subjects without distinctive literal notation
Notation is of excessive length, in many cases far beyond the economic limit
Too complicated and cumbersome

Ranganathan, also, supplied an adverse criticism of L.C. In commenting on rigidity in the notation of some classifications, he said that this rigidity can be broken by numbering the known specific subjects by integers that are not consecutive, leaving unused integers between them—a "gap-notation." But the difficulty is that while some gaps remain, others get filled up and it is in these filled-up gaps that more and more new specific subjects must be inserted. He commended Melvil Dewey for breaking this rigidity in gap-notation by using a "pure decimal-fraction-notation," and continued:

It is a great pity that this master-stroke was lightheartedly ignored and the rigid, primitive, gap-notation of integers was adopted by the most influential scheme of classification in existence - the Library of Congress classification - which has all the influence, resources, and backing of a mighty government. The world is all the poorer for this.

Much earlier Hanson wrote as follows on this same matter of integers versus decimals in the L.C. notation:

Mr. Spofford, Librarian of Congress since the early sixties, and assistant librarian after 1897, had personally supervised the development of the Jeffersonian Classification, then in operation. Mr. Spofford realized as fully as anyone the need of a new system and was most generous and friendly in his attitude toward
our plans. Only on one point was he inexorable: there must be no decimals.

This was one of the reasons why decimals were not more freely used at the outset. Later on, while it would have been a relatively simple matter to convert the numbers for subdivision into decimals by writing them 0000–9999, the advantage of shorter numbers for many thousands of books was thought to be of greater importance than the slight gain in symmetry and regularity, resulting from the decimal arrangement. 15

In connection with the Army Medical-Library of Congress discussions concerning a proposed Army Medical Classification, Taube, in 1950, made this comment concerning the weaknesses of L.C.:

Even within the structure of the Library of Congress itself, this conflict between general and special interests is a constant and recurring phenomenon. Special consultants in various fields have found that the library classification brought together unrelated materials and tore asunder materials which [naturally] belonged together. Much more serious is the feeling of some of the special divisions that the general cataloging and classification system neglects and subverts their special interests. Many of these divisions have set up special collections and special bibliographic keys not provided by the general bibliographic organization of the library. The degree of unification to be achieved in the Library of Congress is a matter of internal administrative policies, but the reality of the problem is additional evidence that the specialist is not content with the by-product of a universal organization. . . . What is required is the recognition that the Library of Congress system, for all its complexity and detail, is not a tool for specialists but a general system for the non-specialist’s approach to knowledge as a whole. 15

Finally, in our consideration of the L.C. classification, we had to ask ourselves, and answer, this question: “Does this classification effectively meet the demands of the University of Wisconsin library?”

In fields where the instruction offered includes doctoral programs, as in the arts, the collections have to be represented in considerable depth and necessitate large volume holdings. We convinced ourselves that the Library of Congress classification does provide a serviceable arrangement for books in these fields where research needs necessitate voluminous holdings. An examination of its quarterly “Additions and Changes” convinced us that an effort was being made to keep the classes represented in these disciplines up-to-date.

We made our decision in favor of changing to L.C. classification knowing full well that it would not be entirely satisfactory in all subjects, and that we were definitely influenced by the fact that we could
make certain advantageous applications of the system. Later we read in Shera and Egan's *The Classified Catalog*: "The first principle to be remembered in either choosing or constructing a classification is that there is no single universal system that will serve all purposes in all fields. The second principle is that there are no absolute values in classification other than those of utility in the particular situation."  

Various studies on Cutter versus L.C. classification, and on re-cataloguing and cataloguing costs, were made for our Library Committee, of which the Librarian was a member. The Committee decided against the proposal of the Library Administration to reclassify the books already classified in Cutter, a project with which we had hoped to combine some badly needed subject heading revision. It approved the proposal to classify all new accessions (i.e., all titles not previously catalogued) according to L.C. classification. The President of the University agreed with the Committee that changing over to the Library of Congress classification was desirable. Then, on May 3, 1954 the Committee brought a proposal to the University Faculty.

At Wisconsin, the University Faculty has a very important part in academic affairs. It "has charge of all matters which concern more than one college, school, or division, or are otherwise of general University interest. . . . Subject to the laws and by-laws of the Regents, under the laws of the State, the Faculty shall have general charge of those questions of scholarship which pertain to more than one college, school, or division; and they may make needful rules for the enforcement of scholarship and discipline . . . . In case of conflict of jurisdiction between University Faculty and the faculty of any college, school or division, the decision shall rest with the University faculty."  

The Wisconsin Faculty is in charge of questions concerning the educational interests or educational policies of the University; requirements for admission to colleges, etc. and for graduation; recommendation of candidates for honorary degrees; regulation of social affairs and athletic sports; investigation of cases of alleged infraction of University rules; elections of Library, Nominations, University and other committees, as well as many other matters.

The proposal brought to the Faculty by the Library Committee follows:

The University Library Committee and the librarians of the School and College libraries recommend that the Faculty approve the use of the Library of Congress classification system in lieu of the Cutter Classification for books in the University library system, except those in the Law Library.  

The Committee further called the Faculty's attention to several points:

1) Disadvantages of Cutter
2) Advantages of L.C. classification, especially the fact that "classification number and subject entries on the printed cards can be used almost automatically." Also that, in using the classification number on the L.C. card there would be in the U.W. library a saving of 42-cents per title in cataloguing costs.

3) Reclassification was not feasible because of the cost alone, the estimated cost being not less than half a million dollars.

4) Discontinuing the use of Cutter classification and adopting that of the Library of Congress meant that, with a few possible exceptions, most of the books classed in Cutter classification would never be reclassified, but would be shelved as far as possible on the same stack levels as the corresponding classes in the Library of Congress classification.

5) Periodicals would be taken out of Cutter classification and all periodicals shelved together alphabetically. Current serials, except periodicals, would be gradually reclassified into L.C.

6) Books in the reference rooms would be reclassified into L.C.

7) The saving in cost of cataloguing would enable the library to keep up-to-date in the cataloguing of new acquisitions and enable it to eliminate the 47,000-volume arrearage within 5 years.

The Faculty voted favorably on the adoption of the Library of Congress classification system.

For the next three months while most Catalog Department staff members were supervising some parts of the reclassifying of all periodicals in the stacks into one alphabetical group, or completing other projects, they were, in addition, studying the L.C. classification system since none of our cataloguers had had experience with it. We held a series of meetings with them in small groups for examination, explanation, and discussions of the schedules. Each cataloguer accumulated a file of L.C. proofslips in the class in which he was to work and studied the class numbers as assigned by the Library of Congress. In September 1954 we were ready to begin cataloguing again.

All book cataloguers but two were assigned to cataloguing the approximately 25,000 books for which L.C. cards with call numbers were on hand. Catalogued next were the some 6000 books for which there were L.C. cards without call numbers or with analytic call numbers. Finally, most of the cataloguers were transferred to original cataloguing, and the cataloguing of books with L.C. cards was continued by a very small staff. By this time, there had been built up a sizable shelf list which helped considerably in the classification of books without L.C. cards.

Since we planned from the first to take full advantage of the
classifying done by the Library of Congress, we accept the class
numbers on the cards unless in the process of checking them with the
schedules we find them in error, as an error in printing, or an earlier
class number which L.C. has later revised or expanded. We have
carried over from work with Cutter no notions which we may have had
of the best placement of material (as subject bibliography which we
had thought previously must be with the subject). We do not dwell on
L.C. classification’s weaknesses, which for our purposes are minor.
We are thankful for its many good features.

Reclassification of reference collections will soon be completed.
We do not worry about the number of books which will remain in
Cutter. In the basement of our library are space and compact shelv-
ing for half a million volumes. Eventually, perhaps in 10 years or so,
the “Cutter books” will be moved to the basement, except the “live”
titles which may then be reclassified. Perhaps we can in the mean-
time reclassify each “Cutter book” that a borrower returns, but
there is no plan for that at present. The 50,000-volume backlog has
now (1959) been reduced to 11,000 volumes, a great part of which is
in Hebrew, Russian, other non-roman alphabets and ideographic lan-
guages.

Five years ago we classified our first book by the Library of
Congress system. Now, five years and 130,000 titles later, we may
well ask: Should we have changed classification? Has the change to
L.C. classification in our particular library been a satisfactory one?
Since I did not think that my personal feeling in the matter would
make for a sufficiently impersonal answer (and furthermore one
should protect oneself against being accused of institutional chauvin-
ism), I questioned several cataloguers, reference librarians, depart-
ment and branch librarians and, through these librarians, faculty who
use the libraries a great deal.

Departmental librarians who responded were mostly from science
and technology libraries. They believe that L.C. classification is at
least as good as Cutter, though some miss the mnemonic feature of
Cutter. L.C. needs further subdivision in some parts of Science, and
scatters books on closely related subjects, notably when Chemistry
overlaps Physics or Medicine. It is better correlated than is Cutter
to the sequence of study in Biology. It does not result in long clumsy
numbers as in Dewey, does not break logical sets as in Bliss. It is
more flexible, in the opinion of one librarian, than Cutter, Dewey, or
Bliss. Several think that the faculties are not classification-con-
scient; one believes that faculty members consider it a good system
if it locates a book as quickly as possible “with little fussing.” One
librarian believes that it is not the kind of classification that counts
but the consistent use of it that makes its application successful.

Representative comments from cataloguers, reference librarians,
and faculty members follow:
It is unfortunate that "the better aspects of" the Library of Congress classification are so intangible, while the limitations are so obvious. However, the system is well suited to the organization of knowledge as practiced by the library classifier. Although comprehensive, it is well indexed through the L.C. subject heading list and the L.C. subject catalog. The examples given in the latter also aid the classifier in identifying the particular aspect of the subject for which he seeks a class number. The multiple volumes of the classification, though intimidating to the beginner, are so organized that once the overall pattern is comprehended, the specifics fall easily into place. Such divisions as biography, study and teaching, etc., within any class come generally in the same progression, whether the subject be comprehensive or minute. The detailed expansions from general to specific allow for the ready identification of subjects with class numbers. The tables demand a certain alertness, but repeated use of them soon brings familiarity.

The principal disadvantage in the use of the classification is in keeping the schedules up to date with regard to new numbers and new expansions. The indexes, lists of individual authors in literature and the personal bibliography numbers are impossible to keep up to date, given the present format of the volumes. With some volumes (BL-BX, for instance) it has been so long since the last printed revision that there seem to be more corrections and additions than original entries. Also the lack of a comprehensive guide to the use of the system creates great problems even for the more experienced classifier. These limitations however are mere annoyances when balanced against the general applicability of the Library of Congress classification scheme to a large collection.

In many ways the preciseness of L.C. is not so useful to the reference librarian as the broadness of Cutter. For example, Cutter classifies French language, literature, literary biography, and the apposite bibliography more or less together, where they are easy to locate and to work with. The specificity of L.C., though, scatters materials instead of bringing them together.

A principal criticism of L.C. by reference librarians and scholars is that it separates bibliographies from pertinent subject fields.
L.C. in general seems to be less popular with the faculty library users than Cutter. Our first comment may have bearing here, but the unpopularity—in some measure—can be discounted—in large part a question of getting used to a new system.

Many L.C. schedules are not kept up to date. Current L.C. practices—as well as specific numbers—not known must be inferred from new card numbers. In this respect, there is need for a manual on the L.C. classification.

Though the narrowness of L.C. is in some ways a handicap (see above) it is easier to pinpoint items, the classification adapts itself easily to new subjects and topics, and it is convenient to use the L.C. list of subject headings as an index to the classification—and the materials classified.

Any complaints against L.C. are purely academic—a matter of simple economics, as long as libraries can cut cataloguing costs by accepting numbers on L.C. cards.

(From the faculty point of view)

My general feeling might be that ANY system well administered would be satisfactory . . . . and I find both the L.C. and Cutter system quite satisfactory for my own purposes . . . . I prefer the Cutter probably because the greatest part of our collection is still classified in this way . . . . I have always felt that the L.C. system tried to compress things too much with a relatively small number of over-all divisions.

I would say that, as compared with Cutter, the new system is superior in that the books now seem more carefully categorized and more logically arranged on the shelves. I have not noted, in the Library of Congress system, any cases where two books of very similar subject and comprehensiveness were widely separated on the shelves, a situation which too frequently occurs in Cutter.

I suppose the best argument for the L.C. system is the convenience of using L.C. cards and in having eventually a more or less uniform system throughout the country.

It seems to me that the problem of satisfactory classifications lies more within the jurisdiction of the librarians who make and work with these classifications and not with the users of the library. Because regardless of the faults in the classification, the value the user gets out of the system will probably depend most upon the efficiency with which the card catalog is maintained. That is even if the system is bad, but if the card catalog permits a person to find a book within a very short time, that is all that really matters.
These somewhat extensive local comments will be recognizable, no doubt, in their general tenor, to many librarians who have served in academic libraries in which a change to L.C. has been made. The Wisconsin change did not involve reclassification of past acquisitions. A recent change involving complete reclassification of the entire collection has been undertaken at Michigan State University at East Lansing. There the change is from Dewey to L.C. It is organized as a ten-year operation financed by a special appropriation of $250,000 which provides two full-time professional reclassifiers, four full-time clerical workers and student help. The work was begun in the late fall of 1955. Current acquisitions were put in L.C. very soon after the initial authorization. There are six open-shelf divisional reading rooms at Michigan State and the reclassification is being done in one room at a time, current acquisitions in L.C. being placed at the beginning of the shelf ranges in each room.

So far, we have dealt with the large university library. Is the small academic library using L.C. and how satisfactorily? A study on "Classification in College and University Libraries" by Eaton was reported in College and Research Libraries for April 1955. Its purpose was primarily to collect accurate figures on the number of institutions using the classification schemes commonly taught in library schools. Of the 744 college and university libraries replying to Miss Eaton's questionnaire, fifty-four libraries of 100,000-or-less volumes were using L.C. classification. Of these, ten would prefer Dewey. Four hundred and eighty-seven libraries of 100,000-or-less volumes were using Dewey, and seventy of them would prefer L.C. Surely Dewey has control of classification here.

It seems to be an accepted fact, in the literature, that L.C. classification is not for the small library. "Few small libraries have ever adopted L.C."; "Since it lacks general numbers for many areas, it will never serve very well in the small library needing broad classification"; "Does not lend itself easily to abridgment for use in libraries with small collections"; "The large library will probably find the L.C. scheme more satisfactory than will the small library."

In order to find out how some smaller libraries which had used L.C. classification for some time were faring classification-wise, a brief questionnaire was addressed to college and university libraries listed as using L.C. classification in the 1936/37 and 1940/41 annual reports of the Librarian of Congress, but limited to those libraries which, in the latest American Library Directory, showed holdings of 100,000-or-less volumes. In all, twenty-nine questionnaires were sent. Replies were received from twenty-four libraries. Of the twenty-four who answered, four reported that they used Decimal Classification and one librarian reported that L.C. had been used but that his predecessor had changed to Dewey in his small combined college-high school library.

In answer to the question, "Are schedules followed as printed?" all answered in the affirmative except one library which used the
term, "Mostly." The question, "Have schedules been abridged?" was answered "No" by all except one library which said, "... in Cutter numbers." To "Do you make alterations in parts of classification?" there were answers of "No," "Rarely," "Seldom," "Few," "Once in a while." One library has an expansion for Lutheran church material, and another uses Lynn classification for Catholic theology; another classes fiction prior to 1930 in PR, PS, etc. rather than in PZ with the idea that older fiction if worth keeping should be in Literature, and if not worth keeping should be discarded. At some future time the "1930" line will be moved up so that PZ will always be fairly recent fiction. Several expressed dissatisfaction with L.C.'s classification of biography by subject.

All but one had student access to the stacks. All believed that the faculty and students liked the L.C. classification, one adding "when they become familiar with it." One reported that the faculty was becoming interested in classifications developed by professional societies for special fields and also in the Universal Decimal Classification.

The following are selections from comments which were made by the librarians who replied:

No one has ever mentioned another classification. Our Reference library in the city uses L.C. and the Public library uses Dewey. Our clientele are familiar with both schemes and use them quite casually.

Our experience has been that students almost never question or comment on the classification, even though they have been accustomed to Dewey in high school libraries. Once they learn to use the card catalog, they accept the number as a matter of course.

Personally, I like it better than Dewey and I have done classifying in both systems and worked as reference assistant with both systems.

I prefer it even for the medium sized college library in spite of the fact that Dewey is easier to keep in mind. Our staff is pretty generally glad we have L.C.

It has seemed to me that 'size' of the collection is not so great a factor in deciding whether or not to use L.C. I think it is a matter of how detailed a classification is needed.

Dewey is simpler and more economical to use in small libraries than L.C., but L.C. works just fine in small libraries too.

From my point of view the L.C. system is very satisfactory, and our faculty members and students have not complained at all, except the Freshmen who were used to Dewey. Basically, I believe one of the most important advantages for the small academic library to adopt the L.C. system lies in the fact that
L.C. gives suggested call numbers in most instances. This makes it possible for small libraries to save money on staff. For example, we have only one professional cataloger, but she can do about 5,000 volumes a year without any help, and this is done on top of her teaching duties which amount to three hours a week, in a subject field.

If there is anything we feel badly about, it is the fact that some one in times past decided to alter the Cutter numbers given by L.C. in order to make them shorter. Now that we have more books than anticipated back in the 1930's, we find ourselves in difficulty.

I firmly believe that any small library wishing to adopt the L.C. system would gain more than it could lose, provided it does not proceed to change the L.C. classification.

As the writing of a paper progresses, many by-paths open up before one and many vistas beckon to lure one away from the main subject. There is one which I would have liked to explore, and that is: With such a close classification as L.C., do we need full subject catalogues? Can we defend this duplication of effort?

This paper was opened with a quotation from Gabriel Naudé and I am bringing it to a conclusion with another quotation from him, made in 1627, in which he gives an opinion on this very matter:

After all which, it shall be very requisite to make two Catalogues of all the Books contained in the Library, in one whereof they should be so precisely dispos'd according to their several Matters and Faculties, that one may see & know in the twinkling of an eye, all the Authors which do meet there upon the first subject that shall come into ones head; and in the other, they should be faithfully ranged and reduced under an Alphabetical order of their Authours, as well to avoid the buying of them twice, as to know what are wanting, and satisfie a number of persons that are sometimes curious of reading all the works of certain Authours in particular.¹⁹

Notes


5. Hanson, *op. cit.*, p. 151.


7. Example: HF39, Economic History of France, but HECOA, Coal trade in Australia 23


18. Questionnaire sent to librarians of twenty-nine academic libraries containing less than 100,000 volumes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of library</th>
<th>Number of volumes</th>
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</thead>
</table>

How long has L.C. classification been used in this library?

Are schedules followed as printed?

Have schedules been abridged?

Do you make alterations in parts of classification?

Approximate size of collection classified in L.C.

Do students have access to stacks?

Does faculty have access to stacks?

Do you believe that the following are satisfied with the classification:

Faculty

Students

Library Staff

If they would prefer another classification, what one?

Further comments: (use verso of this sheet, if necessary)