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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library
THE CLASSIFICATION OF NONBOOK MATERIALS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:
A COMMENTARY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY
by
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to establish a conceptual framework for the classification of nonbook materials in academic libraries. Nonbook materials include such items as maps, documents, music scores, phonograph records, slides, vertical file materials, and microforms of various types. The need for such a study has grown out of the deluge of new information materials flooding academic libraries, and the resulting confusion over which types of classification and control methods to employ.

This is not to imply that the great variety of nonbook classification systems used today in academic libraries are all necessarily wrong--far from it. However, it is not simply a matter of "right" or "wrong" systems, rather, which of the many alternatives can best serve the needs of a particular institution at a certain point in time.

Actually, any academic library can give adequate service to scholarship by employing nonbook classification systems which are less than ideal. This, in fact, is the case today in most academic libraries. What each library must try to do, however, is to give the best all-around service possible; this means the best arrangement and classification of its resources, nonbook as well as book.

The objective in presenting this study, then, is to compile a body of information about current nonbook classification practices which would assist an academic librarian with a nonbook resource in hand, in a particular college or university library environment, to select, adapt, or invent the classification system best suited to exert maximum control over the material in question. The intention is not to elaborate on specific systems or present a multiplicity of examples (this would be better accomplished through an examination of individual systems using the bibliography provided in the last section); rather, the focus is on general features. Nor is it intended to offer pat formulas, ideal systems, or grand solutions; but simply to examine, inform, and suggest a few possibilities, and hopefully to bring some order to an extremely complex and ever-changing field.

BACKGROUND

Today a librarian developing a classification system for a group of nonbook materials can expect little help from the library profession. Organizations such as the American Library Association and the Library of Congress, upon which librarians normally rely for leadership, offer neither up-to-date classification systems nor comprehensive tools to aid in processing nonbook materials. Granted, some help is provided in the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules. Although subjected to serious objections from the profession, the code has, nevertheless, proven to be an important step toward the codification of the descriptive cataloging rules for nonbook materials as well as for books. The code devotes separate chapters to manuscripts, maps, motion pictures, music scores, phonorecords, and pictures; cataloging principles for each of these areas closely follow those established for books. With the aid of the new Rules plus the availability of Library of Congress catalog cards, academic libraries are on the way to standardization in the descriptive cataloging of a great variety of nonbook materials. Unfortunately, this cannot be said for the classification of such materials.
The situation has not, of course, gone completely unnoticed by librarians. Much has already been written on the various aspects of classifying and/or cataloging individual nonbook materials. Most articles in library journals, however, consist of descriptions of the cataloging and classification of specific nonbooks materials in particular libraries—the "how-I-did-it-in-my-library" articles.

A few writers have also conducted surveys which deal with the processing of specific types of nonbook materials, but such surveys are limited in scope, usually emphasizing the lack of standardization in present-day practices. Ottilia Anderson's reaction with regard to maps is typical: "The array of systems in use today for classifying and cataloging maps is impressive, because almost every library has its own (if any), and bewildering because no system can claim to be standard." Some years later Gordon Stevenson effectively explored the same "classification chaos" existing in phonorecord collections.

Even less standardization exists in monographic form. A few cataloging textbooks contain chapters which discuss in a cursory fashion the cataloging and classification of specific nonbook materials. Also, a few books on special librarianship exist which include sections on cataloging and classification, several dealing with the processing of specific nonbook materials. But such texts usually emphasize the one or two classification systems favored by the author, with no mention of the many alternatives.

Scattered monographs on the cataloging and/or classification of various special materials are also available to anyone who wishes to search them out. They are primarily manuals issued by various libraries and library systems detailing their own methods of processing specific types of materials.

In short, despite the appearance, over the years, of articles, textbooks, and manuals which deal with various aspects of the subject, there is no single publication which discusses the overall classification of nonbook materials—not even a bibliography to direct searchers to examples in the literature. Except for providing the opportunity to inspect a few of the nonbook systems in use today, the only real support librarians can glean from available writings is moral. Specifically, all libraries are in the same classification dilemma.

THE SYSTEMS

If one examines the array of schemes now in use in American college and university libraries, five basic types emerge as having proven most successful in answering the requirements of the various nonbook materials: (1) the same as that used for books, generally LC or Dewey; (2) a numbering system supplied by the publisher or issuing body; (3) a homemade system (usually topical) designed especially for the specific material at hand (or a homemade system borrowed from another library and adapted or remodeled for local needs); (4) a simple serial or accession numbering sequence: 1, 2, 3, ad infinitum; and (5) an alphabetical system, usually by author or title. A combination of two or more of these basic systems is also possible—even probable!
Ideally, nonbook materials should be classified under the same system as that used for books with all holdings integrated into one general collection. Book systems are familiar to users and librarians, compatible with existing circulation systems, and are maintained and updated by the Library of Congress and other established organizations which furnish such working records as subject heading lists and catalog cards. Unfortunately, though, provision has not been made for most nonbooks in either the LC or Dewey schemes. Notable exceptions are maps and music scores; but only in the case of the Library of Congress M schedule (music) and to a lesser extent its G schedule (maps) are provisions considered adequate for the larger research collections, and even here the schedules are far from ideal. Also, a few smaller libraries that use the Dewey Decimal system have had some success applying the standard subdivisions .022 (illustrative materials) and .0208 (audiovisual materials) to selected nonbook materials.

The fact that provision has not been made in LC or Dewey for a specific nonbook does not, however, prevent either scheme from being adapted to this purpose. Many libraries claim success in using book systems for a great variety of nonbooks.

Publishers' Numbering System

Fortunately, many materials arrive in the library with numbers already assigned by the publishers. Librarians can either use these numbers or adapt them to specific needs.

The main advantage in using the numbering system of the publisher or issuing body is economy. Time and money are saved if the material arrives in the library with the classification already assigned, sometimes even printed on each item. Since each number is unique, there is no need to verify or check the shelflist; in fact, the number can usually be transcribed by a clerk. Beyond this, by using the number of the publisher, manufacturer, or issuing body the coherence and continuity of the collection and the various series within each collection are not destroyed. Although the number is usually relatively short, it often provides information such as the type of material and name of the manufacturer or publisher. Finally, the publisher's number is a universally recognized symbol that appears in printed catalogs and bibliographies, and by using this number the usefulness of such catalogs is maintained.

Often when a publishers' numbering system is used the cataloging is brief, with the items very simply entered in the card catalog. In some cases, a form card is filed into the catalog containing reference to a printed catalog or index which provides more complete information.

Homemade System

In spite of the many obvious advantages, few libraries can afford the luxury of elaborate tailor-made classification systems, either book or nonbook. Subject systems in particular tend to evolve into complex schemes, difficult to sustain. Certainly if a library does develop a homemade classification system, it should be kept as simple as possible with adequate provisions made for expansion and revision.
The adaptation of an already published (or unpublished) nonbook system created by another library or individual has, over the years, become a popular compromise, especially with the larger departmental libraries. If a library plans to use or adapt an already existing system it should be one that is periodically updated and one that will fit local requirements. Libraries can use such systems in toto or as jumping-off points for their own homemade schemes.

**Serial System**

The simplest classification system of all is one based on accession or serial numbers, which is perhaps no system at all. The serial system can consist of simply consecutively numbering items as they enter the library; or, serial numbers can be used in combination with the first letters or numbers of the LC or Dewey Decimal classifications. To permit later addition of volumes, parts, reels, discs, and so on, serial numbers can be further subdivided decimally. The chief disadvantage of a serial system is that it gives no indication of subject matter; yet it does keep all new materials together, allowing students and faculty to see the latest acquisitions at a glance.

**Alphabetic System**

An alphabetic system consists of simply placing materials alphabetically by author, title, or issuing agency on shelves or in cases. Alphabetic systems work particularly well, first of all, with open shelf collections (periodicals, for instance) where patrons do not need a subject approach through a card catalog but can go directly to the items from a bibliography or index; and, secondly, in collections (such as vertical files) where the materials can be filed and approached directly by broad subject. Actually, small collections of any special material can be housed alphabetically, particularly if the materials are not to be circulated. As a collection grows, however, it becomes unwieldy and difficult to organize in alphabetical sequence. At this point a numbering scheme of some sort is necessary.

**GUIDELINES**

The classification system best suited to a specific nonbook in a particular academic library is not easily determined. No one has as yet evolved a set of hard and fast rules to which librarians can turn for help. There are, however, several factors—conflicting and contradictory as they may be—which, if carefully considered, will at least assist in the selection of a system or combination of systems best suited to a particular nonbook.

In listing these points, it is of course necessary to add that they are clearly interrelated, and that some might be causes, and some effects, were not the entire question of bibliographic control so complex as to render a clear division impossible. Furthermore, it should be at once evident that only a few of the following criteria will be applicable to any one type of material in any given academic situation, and that of those applicable some will take precedence over others. In any case, all points should be carefully weighed against possible applications to the material under consideration. If nothing else, the following checklist will demonstrate how complicated the selection of a system can be, and how interrelated are the various classification, cataloging, personnel, storage, and servicing factors.
First, is the material an integral part of the general collection, or is it to be considered as supplementary? If it is to be a basic part of the holdings, then ideally it should be treated in the same manner as books.

How will the user locate the material? If the material consists primarily of photoreproductions of books, the user may not know whether a specific title sought is represented in book or nonbook form, and will search for the item in the same manner as for a book. Whether the approach is by author, title, subject, or form will affect both the classification system and the arrangement of material. Photos, for example, are usually located by subject; for maps the approach is by area. Some instructors and researchers may even insist that a collection be arranged historically, geographically, or by course content.

What kinds of approaches are desired: subject, author, title, form? How many approaches will be covered by indexes, card catalogs, and other intermediary finding devices? How complex is the proposed system? Is the notation mixed with long involved numbers and letters; have mnemonic features been incorporated into the system? Exactly how much information is the classification symbol to convey? Once again, the library must establish whether a simple location symbol is sufficient, or if the symbol is to indicate subject matter, author, publisher, or other bibliographic information.

Are cards to be filed into the main catalog or into a separate card catalog? Generally speaking, all cards in the main catalog should be standardized to minimize confusion, while more liberties can be taken with both the classification system and card format if a separate catalog is created. The library may even wish to include nonbook cards in the main shelflist to broaden subject searches.

Is the collection to be housed in one location, or is it to be dispersed among departmental libraries, subject divisions, or stack levels? If the collection is to be dispersed, both classification and location symbols must be considered. The location of the collection will, in turn, be determined by the clientele, the necessity and availability of equipment, and the physical layout of the library.

Is the collection to be under the supervision of trained library personnel? A closely supervised nonbook collection may not need detailed cataloging or as close a classification system as one that is left on its own.

Is the material to be in closed or open stacks? An open stack collection that encourages browsing is usually classified differently than a closed stack collection. Can, in fact, the material be placed in open stack areas, or is the format such as to make browsing impractical or even impossible?

Has adequate provision been made for the material in the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress schemes? If not, can either scheme be adapted to the material in question?

Has the manufacturer or issuing body supplied a numbering system? If so, is it easily recognized by users, and can it be used as a library classification system?

Are indexes or bibliographies provided by the publisher or available through another source? Indexes furnished with a set of nonbook materials
can often be successfully used as a means of reaching the materials without completely analyzing each title or without full cataloging and classification.

Are other aids and working records available? If catalog cards are supplied by the publisher or another source, how much adapting is necessary? Is a classification number included on the cards and can it be used as it is? Must entries be established? Are subject headings consistent with those used for books?

What is the present and potential size of the collection? Is it possible to thoroughly classify and catalog all items the library will receive in the foreseeable future? Does the library have the necessary personnel and funds to fully classify and continually update a closed classification system? Complete cataloging and classification of nonbook materials can make excessive demands on a catalog department. Microforms, for example, not only represent a great variety of formats but all languages and subjects as well. And full cataloging and classification of such materials as maps, music scores, and phonorecords require experienced specialists if a professional job is to be done.

How many different types and sizes of items are involved in a particular nonbook collection? Although either the Dewey or Library of Congress systems can accommodate any book-like material regardless of size or shape, the various sizes and types of materials in a particular nonbook collection may have an effect on both storage requirements and the ability to establish a uniform classification scheme.

Does the material lend itself to full classification? Is much of it fragmentary? Does much of the material contain more than one title on each physical item as is often the case with microform and phonorecords?

Will the proposed scheme conflict with the one used for books? Will call numbers conflict with the numbers assigned by the Library of Congress or the library's own catalog department? At the very least, a symbol may have to be added to the notation to designate the material as nonbook.

Who will use the material? Is the collection to be used primarily by specialists who may not need complete classification or even complete cataloging of the material? The scholar can and usually does rely on indexes and bibliographies, and needs only to be informed that a title is available and its location in the library. Or will the users represent a broad segment of interests and specializations?

What is the frequency of use? Are the materials to be used by a relatively small proportion of the academic community at rather infrequent intervals? Or will the collection receive constant use by many individuals? The potential use a collection will receive should influence the type of system selected.

Are there likely to be additions to the individual titles in the collection? A detailed classification system permits expansion of the collection in contrast to a tightly shelved serial system, that is, unless provision has been made for added volumes. If the items are issued in series and arrive in the library over a long period of time, a compatible classification scheme which will not scatter the series should be selected.
Binding problems must be considered. For example, a government documents collection classed into the general collection will have to be bound. With perhaps tens of thousands of items involved, this would represent a considerable amount of money. On the other hand, if the collection is classed in a special area and properly supervised, little or no binding is usually required.

What storage facilities are available, and is there room for expansion? Is the collection to be housed in a fixed location? Limited space often dictates a fixed location which, in turn, dictates the type of system to be used.

Can the material be handled and shifted on the shelves or in drawers with minimum damage? If possible, fragile or bulky materials should not be continually shifted. A closed stack, fixed location system encourages much less handling of individual items than does an open stack, subject classification system.

Is the collection to be continually weeded? If so, how will this affect the classification system? The continual discarding of items may make an elaborate subject classification system meaningless.

Is the collection to be circulated? If so, will items be checked out from the main circulation desk where loan records are kept by call number? Special routines must be established if the material is classified by a scheme other than the one used for books. Maintenance of a charge file by author or title is a comparatively clumsy filing arrangement, yet too many different charge files for various special materials is not efficient.

Finally, how has the material in question and similar materials been treated in the past? As with books, if reclassification is involved, a whole new set of problems must be considered.

**THE MATERIALS**

Anyone assigning a nonbook classification system must consider many complex and often opposing factors. Indeed, supplying a particular nonbook with the best of all possible systems is an involved operation filled with confusion and uncertainties. This has been true in the past and will certainly continue to be so with the emergence of new forms of publications.

As a review of how various criteria can affect the choice of a system, the following is a discussion of the more common nonbook materials found in academic libraries today, and their suitability to various classification schemes. For the sake of brevity, the following observations are offered with the understanding that classification solutions discussed under one heading are sometimes applicable to other types of materials.

**Vertical Files--Alphabetic**

Vertical file materials consist of items of pamphlet size or smaller filed on edge and arranged either numerically or alphabetically in cabinets. The materials are usually kept in folders with headings or numbers typed on the tabs of the folders; in the case of numeric systems, numbers can be
written directly on the materials. Individual pieces are arranged within the folders alphabetically by author or title, serially by date of acquisition, or left unarranged. Because of their ephemeral nature and the quantity of materials involved, items are seldom individually classified or cataloged, except perhaps for serial or inventory numbers; instead, each folder is considered to be a catalogable and classifiable unit.

Numerical systems can be adaptations of book-type systems (LC or Dewey), serial type systems, or simple homemade schemes. Homemade classification schemes are usually based on mixed notations with alphabetic symbols denoting subjects followed by serial numbers. The adaptation of Dewey or LC has been popular with some libraries since both users and librarians are familiar with book systems. Libraries that do use Dewey or LC also have the option of keeping the materials in boxes, shelved with the books.

The Dewey or LC systems cannot, however, adequately accommodate all types of vertical files. Because of the unique and diversified characteristics of many of the materials (bulletins, clippings, pamphlets, pictures, booklets) and because they often cover specific subject areas, vertical file collections do not lend themselves to broadly based book classification systems. Also, numerical systems—whether Dewey, a serial system, or a homemade scheme—require indexes or catalogs for a subject approach. Thus the simplest, most flexible, and to most libraries the most workable arrangement is an alphabetic system by subject.

The chief advantage of the alphabetic subject system is that it is "self-indexing"—no intermediary finding or listing devices are needed for a subject approach. Moreover, an alphabetic system can be easily expanded, and expanded indefinitely. The alphabetic system also allows for browsing.

The alphabetic filing system can be either a dictionary system with subjects filed in strict alphabetic order or an encyclopedic system with main subjects filed alphabetically, broken down by subdivisions. The headings themselves can be based on book-type subject lists (LC or Sears), an adaptation of an index or abstracting service's headings, a subject heading list borrowed from another library, or a homemade list. Some libraries successfully use existing listings for the basic headings, adding their own regional, chronological, stylistic, or other subdivisions.

One of the most popular techniques used by academic libraries, particularly subject and departmental libraries, is the adoption of headings used by the various indexing services. The lists range from general ones such as New York Times Index and Reader's Guide through perhaps the two most universally adopted indexes, Vertical File Index and Public Affairs Information Service, to Art Index, Agricultural Index, and the many other specialized indexing and abstracting listings. Like the standard book subject headings, index heading lists are continually updated and require minimum maintenance for the librarian.

Whatever the system selected, several important questions must be answered before arranging and classifying a vertical file. First, should the file be indexed? For numerically arranged collections an index is essential; for libraries that desire an author-title or multi-subject approach an index is also necessary, for unfortunately, while a pamphlet may cover more than one subject, it can only be placed under one subject in an alphabetically arranged file.
Still another consideration is whether reference cards should be placed in the main card catalog. A few libraries, especially departmental libraries, fully catalog the more important folders with cards filed in the card catalog. Other libraries wait until a subject folder become full, and then bind the contents and treat it as a book with complete cataloging and classification. In some libraries the subject folders are represented by corresponding subject entries in the card catalog containing information on the contents of the folder. A form card following a subject heading in the main catalog (also adaptable to other types of nonbook materials) might look like this:

**EDUCATION - CURRICULA**

For uncataloged materials on this subject consult the vertical file in the Reference Department.

Another factor is how, when, and what to weed; and exactly how the weeding policy will affect the processing of the collection. A vertical file with an active weeding policy (which every file should certainly have) where items must be continually uncataloged and declassified requires minimum processing. The use of crossreferences or dummy cards must also be considered, as well as the need for a subject authority file.

**Slide and Picture Collections--Do-It-Yourself**

The typical academic library picture or slide collection is located in the art department library, and contains photographic or slide reproductions of works of art and architecture. The collection may be under the direct supervision of the departmental librarian or administered by a clerk or part-time student worker.

The collection probably originated as a small group of slides or photos collected by a faculty member for use in an art history course, and soon mushroomed into a much larger collection used by others in the department. But even the largest collections are consulted by a relatively small number of instructors and students for classroom and reference purposes. In other words, picture and slide collections receive intensive use by a limited number of persons.

As a consequence, most have developed into very personalized collections, completely divorced from general library procedures and control. This is especially true of slide collections, some of which are actually arranged by (or at least influenced by) course content, and most of which for all practical purposes are considered the property of the art or architecture history faculty.

Even more than in the case of vertical files, the needs of relatively few users, not the overall requirements of the total academic community, have traditionally dictated the systems used in most picture and slide collections. Moreover, the cataloging and classification of slides and photographs, unlike most academic library materials, is seldom done in the central catalog department. Complete processing is usually considered the responsibility of the departmental library. Cards are rarely placed in the main card catalog; rather, separate departmental catalogs are maintained.
The classification systems themselves are either the invention of the collection supervisor or an adaptation or modification of an already existing homemade system. Generally, anyone developing a system for a college picture or slide collection turns to other classification systems covering the same subject fields, adapting what is considered the best for personal needs, perhaps extracting certain features of two or more systems to create a personal scheme. The most copied system is the Metropolitan Museum of Art's classification scheme.

Despite the considerable amount of processing time required, a relatively close classification system accompanied by minimum cataloging and indexing seems to be favored by most of the larger art and architecture libraries. One important advantage of a close classification system is that when cataloging backlogs do develop, numbers can still be assigned and the items can then be filed and retrieved as needed by those familiar with the system without the materials awaiting laborious indexing or cataloging.

A typical scheme is a mixed notation divided first by subject (paintings, architecture, sculpture, minor arts); next subdivided chronologically, usually by established period divisions (classical, Renaissance, modern, etc.); and then divided by country and alphabetically by artist, or, in the case or architectural collections, by city, site, or type of structure. In some systems, several items are grouped together by artist or broad subject; in the more minute systems, classification is carried out to the level of individual objects and details, even specific views of an object. For example, a slide or picture collection number might look like this: P20/ES/P4/47. P is for paintings; 20 for the twentieth century; E for Europe and S for Spanish artists; P4 Cuttered for Picasso; and slide number 47. In a few libraries, the primary division is by period, country, or simply alphabetically by artist.

The present and potential size of the collection should dictate the minuteness of the system. This is a universal classification principle, but one particularly applicable to art slide and picture collections since an instructor or student usually approaches the collection with a specific subject or view in mind and is seldom satisfied with just any Picasso painting or Greek temple. In any case, the system should be only as minute as needed, yet one that allows for expansion without reclassification of the entire collection.

Because slide and picture collections are considered closed stack collections, many libraries that have not developed their own homemade subject systems find simple accession numbers located through indexes, card catalogs, or other auxiliary finding aids satisfactory. Still other collections, especially those on nonartistic subjects, are classified by LC or Dewey numbers, while many of the more general picture collections are treated as vertical files and arranged alphabetically by subject.

Usually, however, the many possible classification alternatives and the growing need for simplified processing routines has been outweighed by the desire of most collection supervisors to establish close and often highly complex systems. In such cases, if libraries are able to keep cataloging and indexing to a minimum, the time and effort needed to closely classify individual items should, hopefully, be available.
Microforms—Serial System

Microforms represent one of the largest and most important groups of nonbook materials in American college and university libraries, to which many types of classification schemes have been successfully (and unsuccessfully) employed. Often more than one system is employed in a library, and sometimes a combination of systems exists.

The fact that microforms are usually reproductions of print materials has prompted many libraries to classify and catalog them in the same manner as the original records. Libraries either completely classify microforms in LC or Dewey or use only the first part of the subject classification symbol followed by a serial number. In either case, the book classification is used with the addition of a symbol above or below the call number denoting type of microform. The designations can be words (MICROFILM, MICROPRINT) or a symbol (Mf for microfilm, Mp for microprint). The catalog cards can be filed into the main catalog and, if desired, interfiled into the main shelflist; or, if only the first part of the classification is used, the film cards can be filed at the beginning or end of each class number in the shelflist. Using a complete or partial LC or Dewey number facilitates allocation of materials to proper departmental libraries and stack areas if the library wishes to disperse microforms by subject field.

Instead of using the first part of the classification number followed by a serial system, some libraries use a Cutter number after the broad LC or Dewey class, or simply Cutter by main entry after the microform symbol.

A serial type system used alone or in combination is the simplest and has been found by many college and university libraries to be the most successful of the classification alternatives. The fact that microform formats make browsing impossible, and that microreproductions can range from a fragmentary page of an unidentifiable document to an open-ended series of volumes, has forced many to adopt a simple accession-type system. Furthermore, if a collection contains microforms with several titles on a single film, a subject classification is really meaningless.

If necessary, a separate serial numbering system can be created for each location in the library, for each type of microform, and for each type of original record (separate, set, serial, manuscript). Serials and sets can be further subdivided either decimally or by adding individual reel, card, or sheet numbers. Open entry microforms can be housed in a separate location to conserve space and allow for expansion.

Whenever possible, microforms issued in large sets should be subarranged by the publisher's numbering system, regardless of what basic classification system is selected for the overall microform holdings. The many microreproduction projects, beginning with the series based on Pollard and Redgrave's Short Title Catalogue up to and including such comprehensive series as the Selected Americana from Sabin's Dictionary and the Human Relations Area Files on microfiche can be treated as collected sets, with access through the printed catalogs. If a particular series is analyzed, the same numbering system appearing in the printed catalogs should be incorporated into the classification and filing system.

For many years librarians have advocated standardized numbering systems to be developed by the issuing body or manufacturer. The most successful
example to date has been the one developed by the National Microcard Committee of the American Standards Association for microcards. Included on each microcard are the Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress subject classification symbols plus an individual card serial number which consists of a symbol for the publisher's name, year of manufacture, and a serial number of that year. Any one of the three numbers—Dewey, LC, or the manufacturer's serial number—can be successfully employed, either alone or in combination, as a call number.

When considering a microform classification system, an important factor is whether the materials should be centrally housed or divided by subject among the appropriate departmental and subject areas. A single location in contrast to dispersal throughout the library system, although perhaps not always the most convenient for many of the users, provides for better control and service of materials and reading equipment, and should be the first choice of research libraries, particularly those using serial type systems. Also, the fact that many of the larger microreproduction projects cut across disciplines makes subject dispersal difficult, if not impossible. A few libraries with central microform rooms make exceptions with microprint sheets which are kept in clothbound slip cases. Because of their convenient size they can be shelved (and classified) with books in the regular stack areas.

Archives--Principle of Provenance

Archives are created by businesses and corporations, public and private institutions, individuals and families, and governmental bodies. A typical college or university archival collection may contain materials from only one of these sources (for example, the institution's own records and publications) or the collection may represent many types of materials from various creating bodies with each agency representing several record and subrecord groups.

Because of the complexity and uniqueness of most archival groups, the classification (or arrangement) usually employed is a cluster of simple homemade schemes designed to fit the requirements of specific record groups as well as to meet the needs of the overall archival holdings. The archival collection may, then, have one notation system or several, depending on the needs of the individual record groups. Actually, archives are one of the few types of materials that usually require not just one but several custom made systems.

Even though there are variations between schemes (and even variations within a single library), there is, nevertheless, a universally accepted first principle which librarians should and usually do follow when developing classification schemes for archival collections. This is known as the "principle of provenance" (from the French principle: respect des fonds) which provides that archival records must be arranged in the fonds, organic units, or archival groups in which they were originally conceived. In other words, archival records, unlike books, should not be regrouped chronologically, geographically, topically, or in any other predetermined way, but kept in the same organizational pattern as when first produced. The records of each group and subgroup, of each bureau and division, and of each series should be kept intact and not merged with those of other groups, divisions, or series. The implication is that archives, by their very nature, are already arranged—perhaps not according to the best of all possible schemes, but nevertheless, arranged according to some scheme which should be respected and maintained.
Adherence to the principle of provenance insures that the archives reflect, as much as possible, the organization that has produced them, thus enabling the researcher to see the origins and development of the organization as well as appreciate the relationship of one document to another. Also, if the fonds are maintained, anyone approaching the collection with a knowledge of the organization or with a citation in hand is better able to locate specific items.

But librarians themselves have perhaps more to gain than anyone else in retaining the original record arrangement. This can best be appreciated by those who have attempted to rearrange an archival collection and found the task difficult and unrewarding. In contrast, adherence to the principle of provenance not only provides a framework upon which to build a classification scheme, but also furnishes a solid basis for the indexing, cataloging, and servicing of records.

Although strict rules are impossible to formulate, the following points should help in fulfilling the principle of provenance—a principle, incidentally, which librarians would do well to follow in organizing any type of nonbook collection (and thus a principle which can stand elaboration at this point).

First, the records themselves should suggest the nature of the system, with divisions and subdivisions of the scheme determined by the basic organization of the archival group. The collection should be approached as a unit, and need not necessarily relate to other materials in the library or even other archival groups.

The system should be as simple as possible, but one that will provide for expansion and adjustments if the collection is still growing. The librarian who handles the archives must constantly oversee not only the collection but the classification system as well. He or she must continually develop new schemes for incoming collections, and at the same time expand and fit records into existing ones. Under such circumstances the library must consciously fight the tendency to develop complicated notation schemes.

If the records have been broken up, the original order should be re-established as far as possible. In the case of a series of miscellany, or if the original order of a group of loose records cannot be determined, then subject, geographical, chronological, or whatever arrangement best suits the individual character of the items should be employed.

Finally, whenever possible the numbering system and basic arrangement used by the organization for its materials should be incorporated into the library's archival system, if not as part of the basic notation system, at least as part of the shelving arrangement. Thus each record group is arranged in a fixed location in accordance with the hierarchical structure of the creating institution, corporation, or family. Record groups are placed first, followed by subgroups arranged alphabetically by subgroup name or some other logical scheme. Arrangement within the subgroups should again reflect as much as possible the organizational structure of the institution. Arrangement should be hierarchically by subordinate body; then by types of records, broad subject areas, or series; and, finally, by files or records, with individual documents shelved in whatever arrangement best preserves the order established by the creating agency.
The classification system itself can be a pure one, employing either letters or numbers only, or, as is usually the case, a mixed system with a combination of letters and numbers, sometimes separated by periods, dashes, slashes, colons or other markings.

A typical system consists of at least three parts: a symbol (usually a letter) indicating the agency concerned; other symbols (letters or numbers) indicating subdivisions and subagencies; then letters or numbers designating series, record type (i.e., correspondence, diaries, etc.), record file, or container; and perhaps further numbers denoting individual documents in the series or group.

In most archival collections, however, individual documents are not classified other than a serial number for inventory purposes. The last symbol in a number usually indicates, at most, the series, container, or in some cases, the stack location of a group or series of records. Archival materials, unlike book collections, once arranged in the stacks, should be kept in a fixed location and not continually shifted.

The system may or may not have mnemonic features. In any case, the use of abbreviations to denote names of agencies, subjects, and record types should be used with restraint, and should not develop into complex and cumbersome call numbers.

A typical archival number with minimum mnemonic features might look like this: AMA 3-C4. The letters AMA stand for the American Mineral Association; the number 3 indicates a particular committee; the C designates a group of correspondence; and the number 4 is a specific series of letters.

Entries should be made in the card catalog for the individual collections and in certain instances for subdivisions. Specific items and even series usually can only be located through the use of various finding aids (calendars, catalogs, indexes, inventories, location registers, and registration sheets) which archives must keep.

Archives can also be fitted into a topical, chronological, alphabetical or other predetermined grouping. Few, if any, archival collections are now arranged alphabetically; but chronological and topical arrangements do have adherents. When appropriate, historians prefer a chronological arrangement which enables all items of a given period, regardless of origin and relation to other documents, to be shelved together. However, as mentioned before, such an arrangement destroys the relationships of the individual items, and thus makes it difficult to control the various series within the collection. Moreover, a strict chronological arrangement is sometimes unattainable since it is often impossible to assign definite dates.

Manuscripts--Find the Classifiable Unit

A library's manuscript collection usually includes several individual collections, each classified according to the archival principle of provenance. If a particular collection cannot be accommodated by any one type of system (which is often the case) it should be broken down into record groups or "classifiable units," with each group or unit arranged by its own system, and treated as a separate collection instead of a section of one collection, again following the archival principle of provenance. The various individual
collections can be grouped together within the total manuscript collection chronologically, serially, geographically, topically, by document type, or by whatever system or combination of systems best suits the overall holdings.

A university manuscript collection, like an archival collection (in many libraries one and the same), requires as simple an arrangement as possible. One of the most successful is a grouping by document type; for example: A for personal papers, B for business reports, C for church records, I for institutional records, X for miscellaneous manuscripts, and so on. Thus, the Doe family papers would be classified under A for personal papers, then by main entry (Doe family), and further subdivided according to the principle of provenance by type of material: (1) genealogical material, arranged by author; (2) newspaper clippings and other published material relating to the family, arranged by subject; (3) correspondence, arranged by date; (4) legal documents, filed by accession number; (5) literary manuscripts, arranged by form and then chronologically; and so on. The notation on the catalog card might look like this:

Manuscript
A Doe family.
D6 Papers, 1850-1967. 4 ft. (400 items)
Correspondence, genealogical material, clippings, legal papers, speeches, and literary manuscripts.
Unpublished calendar in the library.
Gift of Mrs. Doe, 1968.

The word "Manuscript" denotes that the material is in the university's manuscript collection; A is for personal papers; and D6 is the Cutter number for the Doe family collection. A particular Doe letter would be classified as A/D6/3-3/20/66; the 3 denotes correspondence, and 3/20/66 the date of a specific letter.

Catalog cards are usually filed into the main card catalog and supported by calendars, inventories, and other finding and listing devices. In some libraries individual manuscripts are classified and shelved with the main book collection. The classification might then consist of a symbol (MS or M for manuscript) indicating type of material, the appropriate Dewey or LC classification number, and a Cutter number for the main entry.

Documents--Follow the Publisher

The two most popular classification systems for documents, and U.S. government documents in particular, are the system used for books and the numbering system provided by the issuing body. Some libraries use both, selecting the more important titles for inclusion in the general holdings, with the bulk of the collection classified under the document numbering system.

The advantages and disadvantages of the U.S. documents classification have been discussed at some length in the literature (see the Bibliography) and need only be summarized here. The most important advantage is, of course, the savings in processing time and money. As depository documents arrive in
the library a clerk can look up numbers on the shipping lists and write them on the items. The documents can then go directly to the stacks without waiting for complete cataloging and classification. The library can use the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Documents for a subject approach to the materials, going directly to the stacks without consulting the card catalog or other auxiliary aid, while those wishing to consult the publications of a specific agency can easily do so. Although the document numbering system is a complex one, it is still easier to shelve items by document number than alphabetically; document numbers can also be effectively used on circulation records. Finally, items arranged by U.S. document numbers and housed in a separate location require much less binding than does a collection of documents classified and dispersed throughout the general collection.

One of the most serious disadvantages of the U.S. Superintendent of Documents system is the absence of documents in the main card catalog. Many users, unaware of the documents collection and its finding aids, miss valuable research materials. Selective cataloging of major items does help to rectify this problem, but it also weakens the documents collection and reduces the value of published indexes.

Another disadvantage frequently heard from those handling government documents is the many changes in series numbers for serials and sets caused by their transfer from one government agency to another. These numbering changes must be solved by either leaving the publications under the old class number with appropriate cross-references and/or book dummies; changing old items to the new classification with proper cross-references from the old entry; or, leaving each document under its own issuing agency, again with required cross-references. While this latter solution splits serials and sets, it is the simplest and does retain the advantages offered by the Monthly Catalog. In many libraries, all three solutions are used with adjustments to each numbering change judged on its own merits.

Other disadvantages of the Superintendent of Documents classification include: notation is long and often difficult to read; not all government publications are listed in the monthly catalog or are assigned class numbers; and, there can be delays of several months in assigning numbers to some non-depository items, thus documents must wait unclassified on shelves for the appearance of their numbers in the Monthly Catalog.

It is true that disadvantages outnumber advantages, but the single advantage of having items arrive in the library cataloged and indexed, greatly easing the processing and servicing of tens of thousands of items that enter depository libraries each year, far outweighs the disadvantages. The larger the collection the more advisable it is to use the system of the issuing body, especially if, as in the case of U.S. government documents, there are comprehensive lists and indexes through which users can approach the collection.

Non-U.S. government documents, however, do not always have meaningful numbering systems. This means that they will have to be classified in either Dewey or LC, alphabetically, or, if an extensive collection, in a homemade system based on the archival principle of provenance.

Even where a numbering system is provided by the issuing body, libraries sometimes combine the document numbers with LC or Dewey numbers. In the LC classification, for example, the number assigned to the United Nations (JX/1977)
is used in conjunction with the United Nations document number by many libraries. The same combined system is possible in the F schedule for documents published by the Organization of American States and the Pan-American Union. A few libraries treat U.S. government documents in a similar manner by placing the individual documents series in appropriate subject subdivisions. All publications of the U.S. Office of Education would thus be classed in the L111s in LC or in the 370s in Dewey.

Music Scores—Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal

Provisions have been made for music scores in both the Dewey and LC classification systems. Although those concerned with the processing of music scores are far from happy with these provisions, either Dewey or LC is preferable to the alternatives of using any other system or developing a homemade one. As with Dewey and LC in general, most academic librarians prefer LC.

Frustrated over what they consider inadequacies in Dewey and LC, a few of the larger academic music libraries use a special classification system, either a homemade scheme or one borrowed from another music library. Most libraries, however, "make do" with the same system used for books, often with adjustments to meet local needs. Libraries which use Dewey, for instance, frequently separate music scores from books on music by adding M, MS, or other symbols to the class numbers for scores, a subdivision already provided for in LC. A logical second step in some libraries is the creation of a divided catalog with music scores filed into a separate card catalog as well as separated on the shelves.

Phonorecords

To solve the many problems associated with the classification of phonorecords, academic libraries have developed an astonishing array of schemes. Libraries classify records by the Dewey and LC systems, by various homemade systems based on subject content, by color codes, alphabetically by composer or title, by accession number, and by manufacturer's number—all with equal success according to their exponents. But perhaps even more astonishing than their variety is the complexity of many of the more elaborate systems, particularly the homemade ones. Many phonorecord librarians seem obsessed with the notion that call numbers must convey every possible facet of a phonorecord, including such information as composer, performer, instrumentation, opus number, key signature, type of composition, whether stereophonic or monaural, and the speed and size of the record.

The very fact that there exists such a variety and complexity of classification solutions is perhaps a good argument for using the already furnished manufacturer's number. Certainly the bound-with problem (two or more titles on one physical item) has caused many libraries to reject a subject classification system in favor of a manufacturer's numbering system, as has the decision to place records in closed stacks. Another reason given by those selecting the manufacturer's number is that it is known and understood by both users and librarians and is found in the Schwann catalog and other listings. Also, classification costs are no more (perhaps even less) than for a serial system since the number already appears on the record, jacket, and even on LC catalog cards. For these and other reasons some of the world's largest record collections have adopted the manufacturer's number system.
The serial numbering system also has many followers among larger college and research libraries, since it possesses many of the same advantages as the manufacturer's number: simple and brief numbers, minimal classification costs, fixed location, efficient shelving and retrieval. Still other libraries classify first by composer, type of music, or record size and speed, followed by an accession or manufacturer's number.

Maps

During the last two decades, the growth of large map collections, greatly spurred by the depository program of the U.S. Army Map Service, has caused severe cataloging and classification problems in many college and university libraries. Although provision is made in LC (and to a lesser extent in Dewey) for maps, the rapid accumulation of great quantities of individual sheets has forced larger libraries to resort to minimal cataloging and classification. A compromise worked out by many libraries, including the Library of Congress, is to classify the more important maps in LC or Dewey with the remainder simply filed in an area-subject-date or other homemade sequence with serial numbers used to subdivide further or merely to identify individual sheets. Identification labels are usually pasted on the back of each sheet, giving additional information such as authority, title, and scale.

Other libraries have successfully adapted the numbering systems provided by the various map publishers. The U.S. Army Map Service, British Army Geographical Section, and U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey are three such agencies which number their maps. If a library has a large collection from any of these sources, it is certainly advisable to employ their numbering systems.

Thus the nature, relative use, and importance of a particular group or set of maps should determine its arrangement; therefore, more than one system may be used in a library map collection. It is not unusual for an academic library to have some maps classified (or arranged) by a simple homemade scheme, the more popular maps classified and cataloged in LC, with the larger sets arranged by their own series numbers. This requires various listings, index charts, and card catalogs; it further implies a special map library (or at least a specific area set aside in a reference department or other area) and a qualified librarian to oversee the collection.

Many larger libraries use one of the already established tailormade map classification systems, the most popular being the Boggs and Lewis classification, the Williams classification devised for the U.S. Army General Staff Map collection, and the American Geographical Society's classification.

For libraries creating their own systems, an important consideration is which aspect should be represented first in the call number. With most library materials the subject and/or author title is important; but by its very nature the primary interest in maps is geographic area. Next in importance is subject matter, and, lastly, authority (author, publisher, engraver, etc.) and date. Those developing a homemade system usually classify so that related maps and map groups appear in logical sequence with large regions systematically broken down into subdivisions of smaller areas. This facilitates browsing and allows a given group of maps to be located without reference to auxiliary aids. A simpler but less logical preliminary geographical arrangement is strictly alphabetical by name of area.
In developing a homemade system, then, the first consideration is the geographical or political area, with further subdivisions by subject. The subject breakdown is usually quite broad and differs from geographical area to geographical area, depending on the number of maps and the nature of the area. If necessary, further subdivision may be by date, alphabetically by author, and finally by title or scale.

Classification systems are usually mixed notation, with the area represented by numbers and the subject by letters. Because of the special storage requirements for different materials (sheet maps, globes, atlases, rolled maps, 3-dimensional maps) the system should be considered as much as possible a fixed location, with appropriate markings added to the basic number to indicate type of material.

A typical transportation map of Paris, published by Michelin in 1960, might look like this: 250.1D/M4 1960. The 250 is for French maps; .1 for Paris; D for transportation maps; M4 a Cutter for the author (omitted by many libraries); and 1960 the date. Other items sometimes found in the call number are a Cutter or first letter of the title, a language indication, and a number for the scale (e.g., 2000 in the classification number would denote a scale of 1:2,000,000).

A few libraries, depending on the needs of the users, classify first by subject rather than area, with transportation maps, nautical charts, geological maps, agricultural maps and so on grouped together. But such an arrangement should be limited strictly to specialized map libraries.

CONCLUSION

There is no such thing as an ideal nonbook classification system, nor will there ever be one. Formulas, canons, even rules-of-thumb are nonexistent. In actual practice, there are only alternatives, possibilities, and, finally, compromises. There are perhaps a few generalizations to make, which can be only personal and, in any case, will someday have to be revised. But as personal and tenuous as they may be, they should be noted.

First of all, if ever there does exist a nonbook classification rule-of-thumb, it will be the archival principle of provenance, that is, maintain the material in the organic unit in which it was accumulated or created by the agency, publisher, or issuing body. This principle should certainly apply to all nonbooks which arrive in the library arranged, numbered, or indexed in some fashion. Simple serial systems can satisfy many library needs (principally because of their basic simplicity), and alphabetic, custom-designed subject systems and other predetermined schemes also have their merits; but the advantages of maintaining the original arrangements and/or numbering systems of such materials as government documents, archives, phonorecords, and microforms overshadow all disadvantages. If a collection does not possess an inherent system of arrangement, then it must be arranged and classified in the simplest and most practical system possible for effective and efficient servicing.

This means that academic libraries must break away from book-type classification systems and conventional methods of bibliographic organization by first separating materials on the same subject and then classifying by form--
both principles which librarians traditionally oppose. But as distasteful as the prospect may be, the trend in academic libraries today is toward the concept of several collections held together by an array of classification systems and bibliographic tools, further buttressed through the expertise of professional librarians, rather than a library with many book and nonbook materials arranged and classified into one single collection. Until there are further advances in automation, new and revolutionary bibliographic tools, or perhaps more centralization by the Library of Congress, academic libraries have no other choice but to follow this course.

Librarians are already relying less on card catalogs and traditional classification systems and more on indexes and other tools of bibliographic organization, particularly for those materials that form series or other recognizable groupings. Just as the early attempts of libraries to analyze periodical articles, technical bulletins, and chapters of books in the card catalog proved futile, present attempts to fully analyze, catalog and classify individual items in nonbook series are proving time-consuming and unrewarding. In other words, librarians must continue to redefine their concepts of catalogable and classifiable units.

Simply put, then, the selection of a system for a particular nonbook should be based on: (1) the needs of the users, (2) the circumstances of the library, (3) the requirements of the material, and (4) the completeness of the other control factors to be employed, with the final classification solution not necessarily related to those of other materials in the library.

But whatever the system, it must be flexible enough to allow for expansion, alteration, and even complete change. One of our greatest classification misconceptions has been the belief that nonbook (and book!) systems should last indefinitely. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Collections grow, needs change, funds fluctuate, personnel shift and change, manual and automated techniques improve, new tools for bibliographic organization are developed, uses of materials vary, and philosophies are modified. Librarians must plan with an eye to future classification needs, and thus must structure systems easily adaptable to both foreseen and unforeseen requirements, if such is possible. Like administrators contemplating new library buildings, classifiers must not think that what they are planning today will be adequate twenty, ten, or even five years from now.

Needless to say, the system should be as simple as possible, but one that will do the job adequately. Both psychologically and practically speaking, it is easier to make a simple classification system more elaborate (or even change it altogether) than to simplify a complicated one.

Whenever possible a large nonbook collection should be housed in a separate area, complete with necessary reading, listening, or viewing devices, under the supervision of qualified personnel. Although the creation of separate nonbook facilities adds more exceptions to already complex processing procedures, such a distribution of resources has, nonetheless, consistently proven to be the most efficient method of handling nonbooks. Thus, when a group of special materials, originally integrated into the general collection or dispersed among departmental libraries, reaches large enough proportions to be considered "a separate collection," it should be recognized as such and reorganized (and reclassified) with its own facilities and supervisory personnel.
Finally, in the continuing search for appropriate nonbook classification systems librarians must, on the one hand, think small, but on the other, think big. In this study, classification has been isolated to present a better picture of one facet of bibliographic control; actually, the problem must be treated in its entirety. No single aspect can be considered without the consideration of all other aspects; classification, arrangement, cataloging, indexing, equipment, storage, and personnel must supplement, reinforce, and substitute for each other. In the final analysis, what has been examined is just one portion of the combined effort on the part of the entire library community to best present its total resources to the entire academic community.

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