

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CLASSIFICATION

SESSION 7 – THE THEORY OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION PART 2

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Session Overview

- This session is a continuation of session 6.
- It explains to students the remaining components of a classification scheme; the notation and the index.
- The session ends by elaborating on the principles of practical classification

Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Topic One : Notation
- Topic Two : Index
- Topic Three: Principles of practical classification

Reading List

- Read Chapter 23 of Recommended Text – Kumar, Krishan (2008) *Theory of classification* New Delhi : Vikas Publishing.

- **Topic one:**
- Notion

Notation

- Notation is the group of symbols, technically applied, which as a code represent the subject contained in the schedules of a classification scheme in order that these subjects will be filed at the correct point in a physical sequence of subjects.



Notation

- It serves as the mechanism by which order is achieved on the shelves.
- Its function is not only to indicate concisely the subject content of materials through a code but also to show and help maintain the chosen order of materials on the shelf.



Notation

- A notation may be made up of numeric figurers, alphabets, signs and symbols like commas, colon, and decimal points.
- If a notation uses only one kind of symbol it is referred to as **pure notation** if it uses a mixture of types then it is a **mixed notation**.



Requirements of a good notation

- It must be easy to use; for this to be achieved; the notation must be simple and brief.
- It must be hospitable: This is the ability of a notation to accommodate new subjects in their appropriate places in the classification scheme.
- New subjects are emerging and the notation must be able to accommodate these subjects as they emerge.



Requirements of a good notation

- Notation is hospitable in two ways;
 - Unassigned notation: deliberate gaps are left in the scheme to take care of new subjects or topics which may emerge. It is necessary of us to note that this may be difficult to achieve since it may be difficult to determine that specific place where new subjects may emerge. This will call for the classificationist forecasting.
 - Decimal notation: this makes a notation infinitely hospitable as new topics can be inserted anywhere in a sequence



Requirements of a good notation

- A notation must be expressive: an expressive notation displays the relationship of subjects within the scheme.
- It helps the user of the scheme to recognize the structure of the scheme and to which subjects are general and which are subdivisions.



Requirements of a good notation

- **Benefits of an expressive notation**
- It reveals the structure in the subject
- It makes it easier to search or browse subjects
- It is easier to remember expressive notations than non-expressive notation with equal lengths.



Requirements of a good notation

- **Disadvantages of expressive notation**
- They are longer than non – expressive notation
- It may waste symbols
- Mixed notations may not reveal a clear hierarchy in an expressive notation



Requirements of a good notation

- A notation must allow for synthesis: it is the process of composing a class number by combining various elements or concepts in order to represent a complex subject.
- The notation must therefore allow the process of combining concepts.
- This process is also referred to as number building.



Requirements of a good notation

- Flexibility: a notation which is flexible allows a variety of citation orders to be used.
- Shelf notation: this means that in case a long notation is generated, it should be possible for a shorter form to be put on the spine of the book to aid in shelving.
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- Topic two:
- Index



Index

- The index serves as an important auxiliary in the determination of the order of the scheme.
- It is usually an alphabetical subject index.
- It also serves as a guide to the place of subjects in the schedule.



Index

- The index is essentially a guide for the classifier to find the appropriate sections of the schedules where the subject concerned may be found.
- It lists topics, locates them and includes all necessary synonyms.



Index

- It does two basic things;
- 1. It locates subjects within the systematically arranged classification.
- 2. It shows related aspects of a subject which are distributed beyond a single class
- The index should not be used alone but in conjunction with the schedules



- Part Three:
- General principles of classification



GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFYING

- Class the item first according to subject, then by the form in which the subject is represented, except in the generalia class and in literature, where form might be paramount



GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFYING

- Class item where it will be most useful.
- The classifier has to consider the nature of the collection and the needs of the user.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFYING

- Place the item in the most specific subject division that will contain it, rather than with the general topic.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFYING

- When the book deals with two or three subject, place it with the predominant subject or with the one treated first.
- When the book deals with more than three subjects, place it in the general class that combines all of them.

