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Concerning Classification: American Alternative Classification Systems 1930 - Today

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Concerning Classification:

American Alternative Classification Systems 1930 – Today

Presented by: Sasha Frizzell, Binghamton University

OVGTSL 2024

May 23, 2024





Hi!

Sasha Frizzell (she/they)

- Catalog/Metadata Management Librarian
 - Binghamton University, New York
- Research includes: alternative classification and subject headings with focus on pre-1960s solutions



Outline

- History of Library Classification in America
- Supplemental/Derivative Systems 1930-1960
- Modern alternatives 1960-

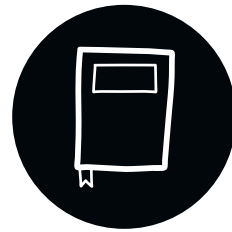




How did systematic classification start?



- Public, and growing, libraries required open browsing and logical organization.



- Figuring out how to classify all of knowledge is hard.



Cutter Expansive Classification

TO SUM UP.

Books are divided in this library according to —

- (1) their subject or literary form,
- (2) their size,
- (3) their author,
- (4) their title;



Cutter, Charles A. (1882). Boston Athenæum; how to get books, with an explanation of the new way of marking books. Press of Rockwell and Churchill. p. 17

Milton's *Paradise Lost*,
in French, second edition
in the second library

:VEP+.M64pF2

: - in the secondary library

V - Literature

E - England

P - Poetry

+ - Quarto size (25-30 cm)

.M64 - Milton

p - Paradise Lost

F - in French

2 - second edition
(held by the library)

Putnam's Classification

The primary classes are as follows:

General and Miscellaneous Works.....	Designated as Class A.
**Juveniles.....	“ “ B.
General History, Ancient History.....	“ “ C.
History of Asia, Africa, Oceanica.....	“ “ D.
History of Europe.....	“ “ E.
History of America.....	“ “ F.
Geography, Voyages and Travels (General).....	“ “ G.
Travels in Asia, Africa, Oceanica.....	“ “ H.
Travels in Europe.....	“ “ J.
Travels in America.....	“ “ K.
Biography.....	“ “ L.
Language and Literature.....	“ “ M.
Poetry, Drama.....	“ “ N.
Mathematics, Physics, Astronomy.....	“ “ O.
Natural Science.....	“ “ P.
Medical Science.....	“ “ R.
Useful Arts.....	“ “ S.
Fine Arts, Architecture, Amusements, Sports.....	“ “ T.
Philosophy, Education.....	“ “ V.
Social and Political Science, Law.....	“ “ W.
Religion.....	“ “ X.
Foreign Literature (in the originals, and not otherwise classed by subject).....	“ “ Y.
English Prose Fiction.....	“ “

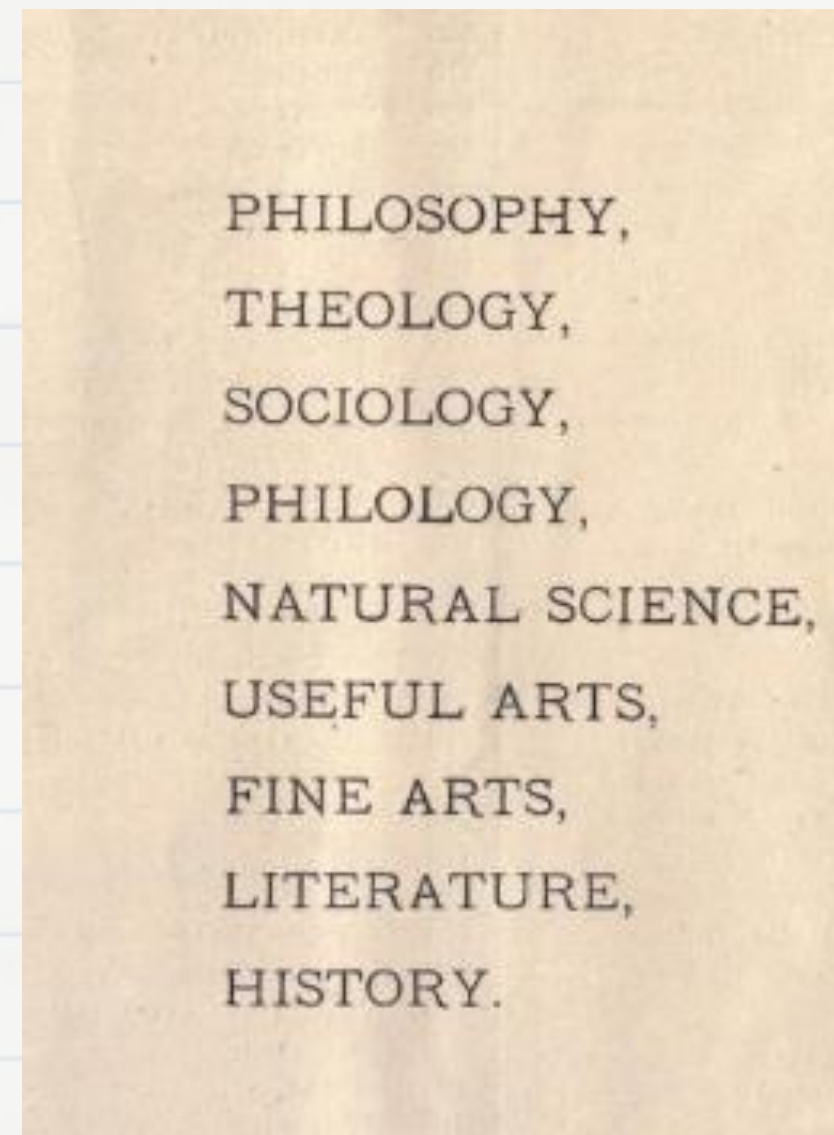
Milton's *Paradise Lost*,
in French, second edition
in the second library

Ng591-600

Ng - Poetry by English authors
591-600 - [Mil - Moh] Author mark

Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

- Created by Melvil Dewey in 1876
- Shelf ordered by subject
- Abridge edition printed 1894
- DDC added to LC cards in 1930



Milton's *Paradise Lost*,
in French, second
edition
in the second library
812 - English Poetry

Dewey, Melvil (1876). A classification and subject index, for cataloguing and arranging the books and pamphlets of a library.

Library of Congress Classification (LCC)

1815

LC buys Thomas Jefferson's library -- shelved by subject, chronology, and size.



Originally shelved by Bacon's Hierarchy of Reason:
Reason
Memory
Reason
Imagination

That stopped working

1897 LoC starts to create their own classification system

Based on the collection of the Library of Congress

Library of Congress Classification (LCC)

- Published in segments
- E-F published 1901
- 1940 - most topics covered except literature and law
- Law starts in late 1960s
- 2002 - online publication of LCC
- KI (Indigenous Law) published in 2014



Why do people need alternatives?

- DDC & LCC were built to classify libraries of traditional Western knowledge which skewed classification toward centering a white, male, Protestant experience.
- Librarians with collections that focused on experiences or knowledge from marginalized groups found there were only small (or no) ranges for the classification of materials in their libraries





Modified DDC or LCC



Supplementary systems that either **added to**, or **slightly modified**, existing classification ranges.

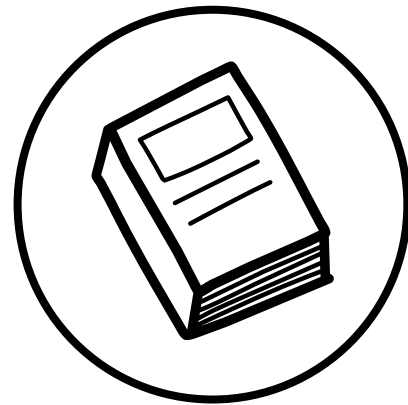
- Created new ranges
- Altered ranges
- Reimagined the advice of the system



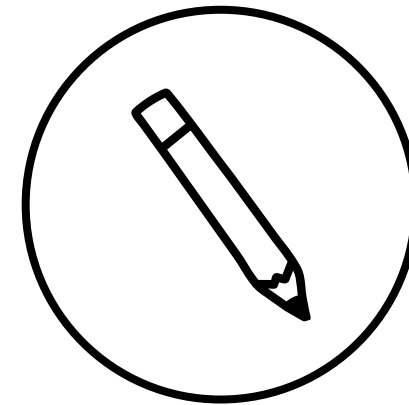
What types of collections used alternatives?



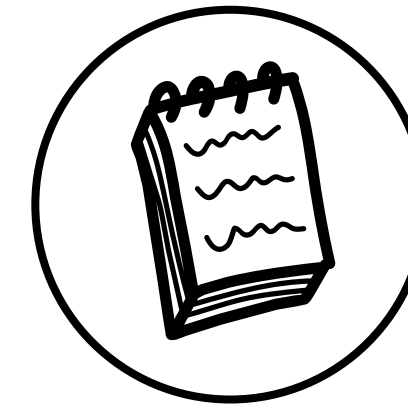
Non-Protestant Libraries



Non-English or
International Libraries



Taboo collections



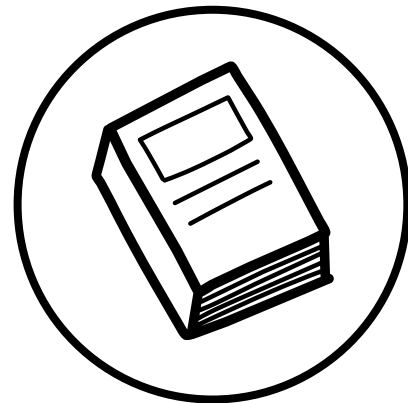
Non-White collections



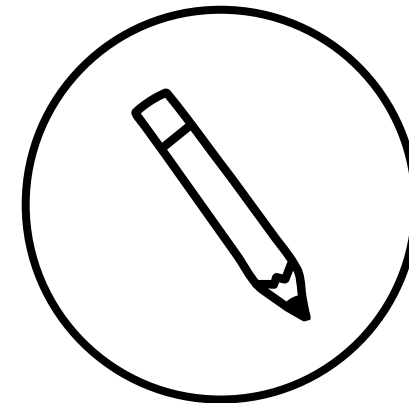
What types of collections used alternatives?



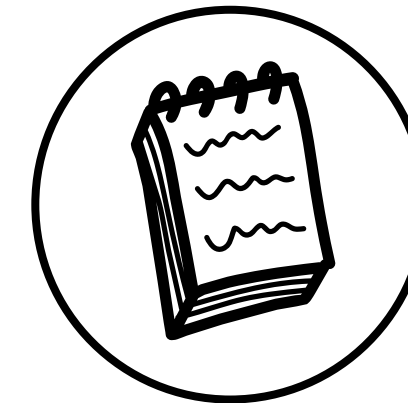
Non-Protestant Libraries



Non-English or
International Libraries



Taboo collections



Non-White collections



AN ALTERNATIVE CLASSIFICATION FOR CATHOLIC BOOKS

*A scheme for Catholic Theology, Canon Law
and Church History*

To be used with the Dewey Decimal, Classification
Décimale, or Library of Congress Classifications

Compiled for the
CATHOLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
by
JEANETTE MURPHY LYNN

THE BRUCE PUBLISHING COMPANY : MILWAUKEE
AND THE
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION : CHICAGO
1937

Special library: Catholic

- Created by the Catholic Library Association
- Published in 1937
- Needed to solve:
 - disagreement in shelf order
 - very dense areas of material

TABLE OF NOTATION ADAPTATIONS
 (Class headings in capitals are from the Alternative schedules,
 those in lower case from the Library of Congress Religion outlines)

<u>Classes</u>	For Libraries using L.of C. Plan A	For libraries using Alterna- tive outlines Plan B	For those using Dewey Plan C
ECCLESIASTICAL LITERATURE	BQ	BQ	C30 - C37.499
Christianity. Generalia	BR	BR	200 - 219
Bible	BS	BS	200 - 229
CATHOLIC THEOLOGY	BQT	BT	C40 - C46.278
Doctrinal theology	BT	BTZ	see C40
Practical theology (non- Catholic)	BT	BVZ	260 - 269
CANON LAW	BQV	BV	C50 - C51.525
CATHOLIC CHURCH HISTORY	BQX	BX	C70 - C78.399
Denominational history (non-Catholic)	BX	BZ	283 - 286
<u>Examples</u>			
Augustine, S., Civitate dei	BQ 5695	BQ 5695	C35.695
Gilson, The philosophy of S. Thomas	BQ 6889	BQ 6889	C36.889
Gibbons, Faith of our fathers	BQT 217	BT 217	C40.217
Delany, Why Rome?	BQT 227	BT 227	C40.227
Lasance, Catholic girl's guide	BQT 2645	BT 2645	C42.645
Missale Romanum	BQT 4291	BT 4291	C44.291
Refici, Missa cantabile	BQT 4303	BT 4303	C44.303
Benedictine Breviary	BQT 4735	BT 4735	C44.735
Uniate Ethiopian lectionary	BQT 5075	BT 5075	C45.075
Codex canonicus	BQV 207	BV 207	C50.207
Ayrinhac, Marriage law in the new code	BQV 230 .1012	BV 230 .1012	C50.23 .1012
Attwood, The Catholic East- ern churches	BQX 5453	BX 5453	C75.453
Mourret, The history of the Catholic church	BQX 77	BX 77	C70.077
Montalembert, Monks of the west	BQX 6808	BX 6808	C76.808

Alternative Classification for Catholic Books

- Functioned as modified LC or Dewey
- Only included Catholic subjects
- Adjusted shelf order to align with doctrinal philosophy

Hynn, Jeannette Murphy. An Alternative Classification for Catholic Books: A Scheme for Catholic Theology, Canon Law and Church History. 1937.

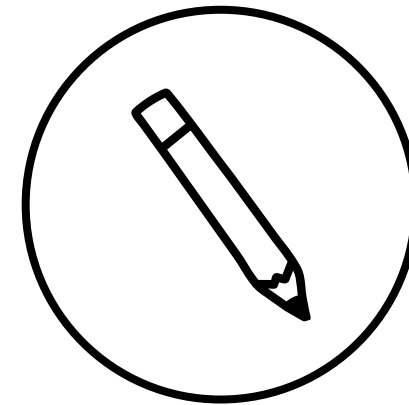
What types of collections used alternatives?



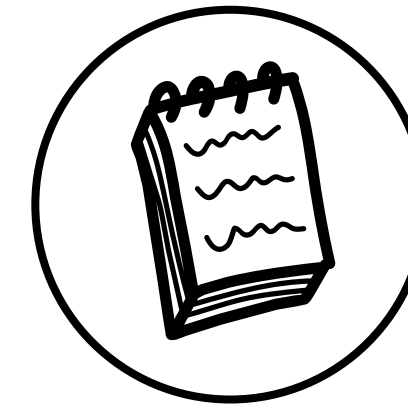
Non-Protestant Libraries



Non-English or
International Libraries



Taboo collections



Non-White collections



Special Library: Harvard Yenching

漢和圖書分類法

A CLASSIFICATION SCHEME
FOR
CHINESE AND JAPANESE BOOKS

BY

A. K'AI-MING CH'IU 裘開明

LIBRARIAN OF THE HARVARD-YENCHING INSTITUTE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY
*Formerly Librarian of Amoy University, Member of the Supervisory Board
and Chairman of the Cataloging Committee of the
Library Association of China*

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF

H. Y. FENG 馮漢璣

*Professor of Archaeology and Ethnology
National University of Szechuan
Formerly Director of the Provincial Library of Hupeh*

ZUNVAIR YUE 于震寰

*Chief of the Cataloging Department, National Central
Library of China, Formerly Office Manager
of the Library Association of China*

COMMITTEES ON FAR EASTERN STUDIES
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES

1219 16TH STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.

Preliminary Lithoprint Edition, 1943

- Created for the Harvard Yenching Library
- Published in 1943, still in use today
- Needed to solve:
 - inequitable space for non-English literature
 - challenges of alphabetical shelf-listing
 - decentralizing Eurocentric models of knowledge
 - integration of Western & Eastern resources





“It was a period of transition during which three trends were dominant. The first was to cling tenaciously to the old sì kù (fourfold) classification of the eighteenth century.

The second, diametrically opposed to it, was to abandon the old system completely and to adopt some Western scheme such as Dewey's.

The third was to divide old and new books into watertight compartments, using the sì kù scheme for the old and some modern system for the new.”



Harvard Yenching Classification

Milton's Paradise Lost,
John Smith edition

5988.55.63.66

5988 - English language
and literature

.55 - Author number

.63 - Work number

.66 - Editor surname

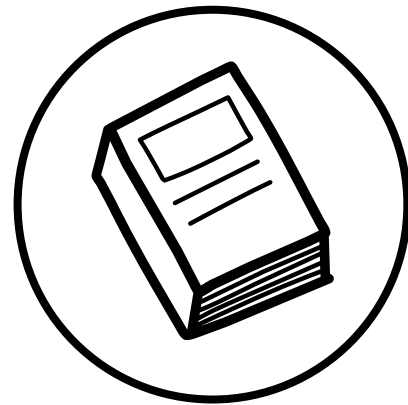
分類總目	TABLE OF MAIN CLASSES
100-999 中國經學類	CHINESE CLASSICS
1000-1999 哲學宗教類	PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
2000-3999 歷史科學類	HISTORICAL SCIENCES
4000-4999 社會科學類	SOCIAL SCIENCES
5000-5999 語言文學類	LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
6000-6999 美術游藝類	FINE AND RECREATIVE ARTS
7000-7999 自然科學類	NATURAL SCIENCES
8000-8999 農業工藝類	AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY
9000-9999 總錄書志類	GENERALIA AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chiu, Kaiming, et al. A Classification Scheme for Chinese and Japanese Books. Committees on Far Eastern Studies, American Council of Learned Societies, 1943.

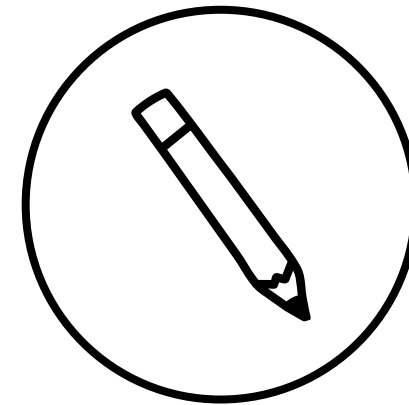
What types of collections used alternatives?



Non-Protestant Libraries



Non-English or
International Libraries



Taboo collections



Non-White collections



Special Library: Moorland–Spingarn Research Center

- Dorothy Porter Wesley becomes curator of the Black resource collection at Howard in 1930 (now known as the Moorland–Spingarn Research Center)
- Notes DDC is not a good fit for the collection
- Creates a new classification that desegregates resources by and for Black people
- Re-centers hierarchy around the tenants of the Harlem Renaissance





In the Dewey Decimal System they had number 326 -- that meant slavery -- and they had one other number [...] that meant colonization.

Every book, whether it was a book of poems by James Weldon Johnson, who everybody knew was a Black poet, went under 325.

And that was stupid to me.

Why not take the whole Dewey Decimal System and put a book by James Weldon Johnson, the poet, under the number for poetry? You see? So that's what I did.



Special Library: Moorland–Spingarn Research Center

- Art
- Anthropology
- Communications
- Demography
- Economics
- Education
- Geography
- History
- Health
- International Relations
- Linguistics
- Literature
- Medicine
- Music
- Political Science
- Sociology
- Sports
- Religion



Critical Classification

Became a talking point in the 1970s

Recognizes the widespread use of LCC/DDC

Interrogates the structure of classification

Demands change

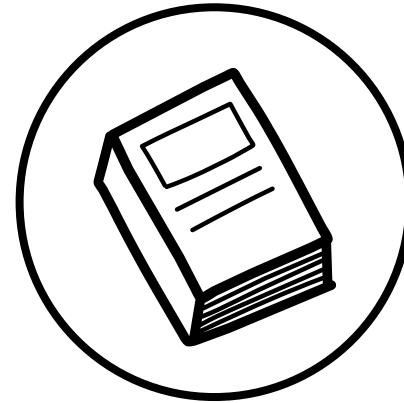
Shift from derivative to new classification systems



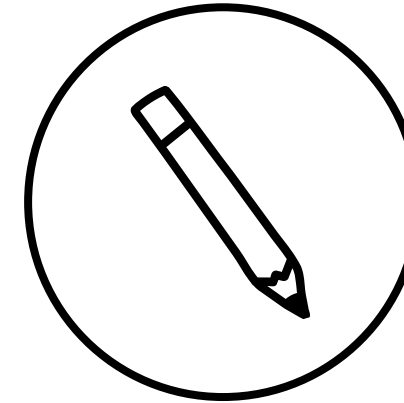
Current Systems



Recenter local knowledge



Centering the patron
experience



“special classes of people”



Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC)

- Library first organized using modified Brian Deer Classification (BDC)
 - Modified to center geographic location of library
 - Centers Indigenous knowledge and experience
 - Favors simple classification
- This iteration called BDC BC

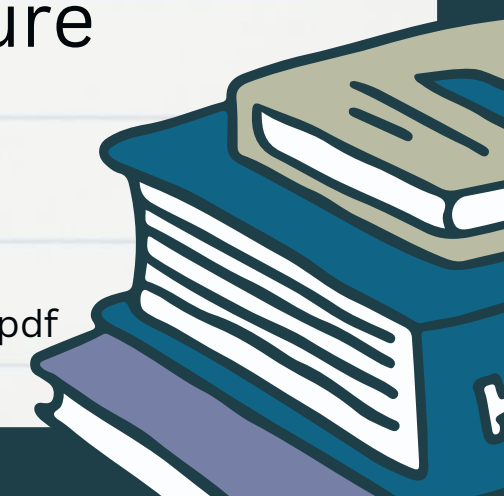


UBCIC Classification – BDC–BC

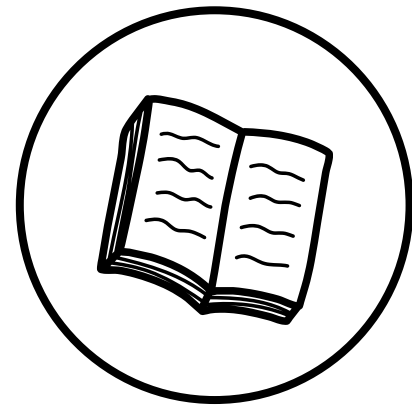
- A - Reference
- B - History and Culture, British Columbia
- C - History and Culture, North America
 - CBO (Indigenous People of North America -- Algonkian -- Anishinaabe)
 - CBO J6 1990 (Ojibway Heritage by Basil Johnston)
- D- History and Culture, International + Archaeology and Anthropology
- E - Education
- F - Financial Systems
- G - Governance & Self-government
- H - Colonizing government policy research
- J - Justice
- L - Law and Legislation
- M - Rights & Title
- N - Nature & ecological knowledge
- P - Communities
- R - Roles & Relationships
- S - Health
- T -Language
 - (TW English)
- V - Worldview
- W - Tangibles & material culture
- Y - Intangibles culture & literature

UBCIC Resource Centre Classification Plan . (n.d.).

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/ubcic/pages/1166/attachments/original/1507335846/UBCICClassification.pdf>



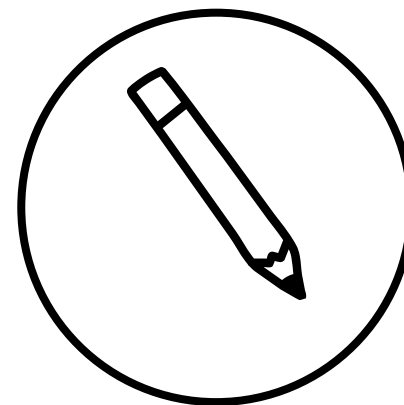
Current Systems



Recenter local knowledge



Centering the patron
experience



“Special classes of people”



Fus Fixico

- Created by and for the Choska Talfa Room, Bristow Public Library, Oklahoma
- Classification for Oklahoma genealogy and local history
- Centers the patron's need to find and perform research



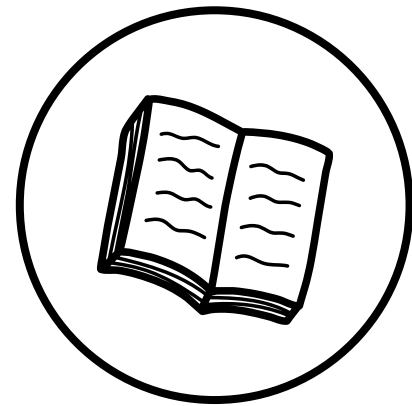
Fus Fixico

- A - Research Basics & Methodology
- B - Professional Research & Communicating results
- C - Resources from information agencies
- D - Scientific & Technical Aspect Guides
- E - Geographical Aspects Guide
 - E.1.0.3 (Human Geography - Indigenous people - Cherokee)
 - E.1.0.3.3. When the Night Bird Sings by Joyce Squelchie Hifler

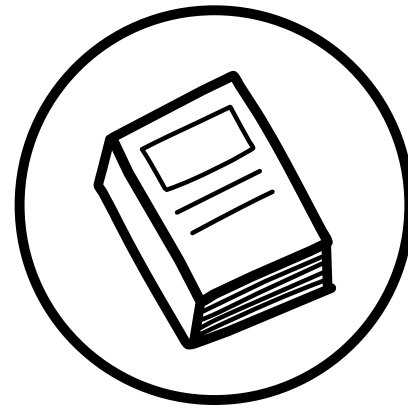
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<https://shareok.org/handle/11244/338986>



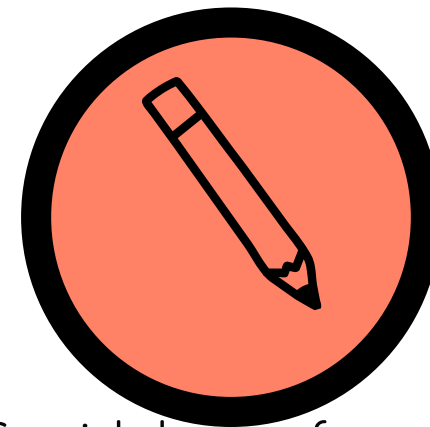
Current Systems



Recenter local knowledge



Centering the patron
experience



"Special classes of people"



Lexington Pride Center Library **(formerly Gay and Lesbian Services Organization or GLSO)**

- Project started in 2012
- Felt that current LCC was inappropriate:
 - High density of topics in HQ
 - “The Family. Marriage. Women.”
 - Implications about morality
 - Broadly doesn’t align with feminist or queer theory
- Created a new system focused on expandability



GLSO classification

Fiction: Alphabetical by author

A FIC T (Adult -- Fiction -- Author last name starts with T)

Non-fiction: by subject and subcategory

- Anthology (ANT)
- Art (ART)
 - AIDS (AIDS)
 - Film (FILM)
 - Performance (PERF)
 - Visual (VISU)
 - C ART VISU (Children's book on visual arts)
- Biography (BIO)
- Cultural Studies (CULT)

- History (HIST)
- Current Social Events (ISSU)
 - Activism (ACTI)
 - AIDS (AIDS)
 - HATE (HATE)
- Law (LAW)
- Literature (LIT)
- Psychology (PSYC)
- Relationships (RELA)
- Reference (REF)
- Self-Help (SELF)
- Sex (SEX)



Common threads

- One size can't fit all
- No one knows the needs of a community better than the people in that community
- Focus on the patron needs
- Classification is still hard



References

- Chiu, Kaiming, et al.** A Classification Scheme for Chinese and Japanese Books. Committees on Far Eastern Studies, American Council of Learned Societies, 1943.
- Cutter, Charles A.** (1882). Boston Athenæum; how to get books, with an explanation of the new way of marking books. Press of Rockwell and Churchill.
- Dewey, Melvil** (1876). A classification and subject index, for cataloguing and arranging the books and pamphlets of a library.
- Putnam, Herbert** (1889). System of classification, index and scheme for numbering books. Minneapolis Public Library.
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- UBCIC Resource Centre Classification Plan .** (n.d.). <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ubcic/pages/1166/attachments/original/1507335846/UBCICClassification.pdf>
- Wu, Eugene W.** “The Founding of the Harvard-Yenching Library.” *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, vol. 1993, no. 101, 1 Dec. 1993, pp. 65–69.

Thanks For Listening

Any questions?

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