WEBDEWEY: THE DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION IN THE WEB

Apurba Jyoti Majumder   Gautam Kumar Sarma

Abstract

The Dewey Decimal Classification system is continuously revised to keep pace with knowledge. This means accommodating new topics, as well as revising the old one. Today the Dewey Decimal Classification has undergone 21 revisions to keep itself abreast of the ever advancing frontiers of knowledge and to cater the increasing demand of its users. Edition 22 is the first edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification to be produced in the context of the web environment known as WebDewey. It is updated regularly (quarterly) to cope up with the pace of increasing universe of knowledge. This article gives a brief idea about the online version of DDC and its features, updates and subscription information etc.

Keywords : Dewey Decimal Classification, WebDewey, Abridged WebDewey, Library Classification

1. Introduction

The year 1876 is a landmark in the history of library classification, when the first Dewey Decimal Classification was brought out by Melvil Louis Kossuth Dewey, the father of library movement in the USA as a tool for the organization of books on the shelves. Dewey was the first person to properly expand on and define his ideas concerning a classification that placed books into a relative order based on disciplines rather than an alphabetical order, or one that simply identifies a shelf space for a specific book. The DDC was the first timely modern system that introduced features like relative locations and a relative index. This allowed book to be placed in stacks based on their relationships to one another, and freed libraries to begin more freely organizing their libraries.

This scheme is presently used in the libraries throughout the globe. The reasons for its world wide popularity can be attributed to its cordial virtues viz. universality and hospitality for new subjects, a simple and expandable notation, good mnemonic features, a permanent machinery for its revision and updating, availability in full and abridged editions and last but not least an outstanding relative index.

2. Principles

1. All the areas of specialized knowledge developed in modern society were included.
2. Notation is pure, simple, and hospitable.
3. The decimal fraction device provided infinite hospitality at the end of the chain.

4. Consistent ordering and synthesis leads to mnemonics.

5. The powerful relative index for locating the subject.

6. Expensiveness is achieved by extensive division by decimal fraction device.

3. Characteristics

1. Its pragmatic or realistic development now conjoined with a Posterior molding of a Philosophic design, notably purification of the concept of hierarchical subject relation.

2. Its adaptability for use in libraries of various sizes and kinds because of its hierarchically expressive notation which permits varying degrees of inclusiveness and exclusiveness within its decimal structure.

3. Its adaptability both for conventional (manual) shelf or classed catalogue analysis and also, through its meaningful notation, for retrieval mechanism and computerized systems.

4. Its thrust towards international perspective both in depth of analysis and its adaptability of application.

5. Its endorsement and encouragement of translations.

6. Its use by central bibliographic services and the subsequent availability of classification numbers for specific titles.

4. Editions

The DDC is published in full and abridged in print, electronic versions and web environment. The latest 4 volume print edition of DDC is Edition 22, was published in July 2003.

Table1: Publications and number of volumes of different full version editions of DDC

Edition	Yr of pub.	Volume(s)		Edition	Yr of pub.	Volume(s)
1	1876	1 vol		13	1932	1 vol
2	1885	1 vol		14	1942	1 vol
3	1888	1 vol		15	1951	1 vol
4	1891	1 vol		15 (Rev)	1952	1 vol
5	1894	1 vol		16	1958	2 vols
6	1899	1 vol		17	1965-67	2 vols
7	1911	1 vol		18	1971	3 vols
8	1913	1 vol		19	1979	3 vols
9	1915	1 vol		20	1989	4 vols
10	1919	1 vol		21	1996	4 vols
11	1922	1 vol		22	2003	4 vols
12	1927	1 vol				

There are alternatives to the full volume of DDC available in an abridged printed DDC which is much shorter, but that does not extend to as much depth as the full. The abridged edition is a logical truncation of the notational and structural hierarchy of the corresponding full edition on which it is based, and is intended for general collections of 20,000 titles or less. The latest abridged version is Edition 14, was published in February 2004.

The online version of DDC named WebDewey was the first web based DDC scheme which was published on June15, 2003.

5. Journey of Dewey Classification from Print to Web Version

The DDC system has a long history (131years) of expansion and adaptation to the needs of the communities it serves.

From edition 1 to edition 10 the scheme was copyrighted by Dewey or by the Library Bureau. In 1924 he delegated the copyright to Lake Placid Club Education Foundation. After the death of Dewey in 1931, the trustees of the Foundation incorporated Forest Press in 1933 as its subsidiary for bringing out subsequent editions of Dewey Decimal Classification. Again in 1961, the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation delegated all copyrights in classification to the Forest Press. In 1988 the Forest Press became a division of OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. and since than subsequent editions has been copyrighted by the OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. The 1st edition of Dewey Decimal Classification was published under the title 'A classification and subject index for cataloguing and arranging the books and pamphlets of a library'. The 1st edition of 1000 copies consisted of 44 pages covering 12 pages of introduction, 12 pages of schedule and 18 pages of index. The most recent edition to emerge was the 22nd print and online edition in 2003. Revisions of the DDC are institutionalized and so is a continuous process. In every revision, it has been expanded, modified, rectified and made more modern in methods by applying the results of latest research in library classification. Some important steps are:

1. The process of avoiding Christian bias was started from mostly 20th edition by relocating the numbers and giving spaces to other religion and religious thoughts.
2. Another notable feature of this classification scheme is giving more emphasis to the needs of western civilization. And through the revisions of the last five editions the scheme is trying to give more space and light to the other regions of the world as well as extraterrestrial worlds.
3. The reduction of Table 7 from edition 22nd print and online both is the sign of the size reduction of the scheme for classifier efficiency.
4. The inclusion of Information Technology and IT related concepts is one of the major features of the updates.

6. WebDewey

Edition 22 is the first edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification to be produced in the context of the web environment. Hence, WebDewey means the database of Dewey Decimal Classification on WWW (World Wide Web). WWW is the network of computers across the world interconnected together on the internet, and using the concept of hypertext to link internet sites and information ion the internet. Like print versions of DDC, WbDewey is also found in both full and abridged versions; they are WebDewey and Abridged WebDewey.

6.1 Key features

- All content from DDC 22 & Abridged Edition 14, including quarterly updates (new developments, new built numbers and additional electronic index terms)
- An easy-to-use, browser-based interface that allows you to search the DDC (and related terminology) efficiently and navigate intuitively
- Thousands of Relative Index terms and built numbers not available in the print DDC
- Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) that have been intellectually mapped to Dewey headings by DDC editors
- Selected LCSH mappings from the Forest Press publication, *People, Places & Things*
- LCSH that have been statistically mapped to Dewey numbers from records in WorldCat (the OCLC Online Union Catalog)
- Links from mapped LCSH to the LCSH authority records
- Quarterly updates, incorporating the latest changes to the Classification and new LCSH mappings, index terms and built numbers
- An annotation capability, which allows you to add your own notes into WebDewey to reflect local classification practices

6.2 WebDewey updates

One of the main features of WebDewey is its updates. OCLC make updates periodically to the data accessible via the WebDewey or Abridged WebDewey service, using its best efforts to make these updates available on a quarterly basis. The updates available till date are as follows:

2007 September	2007 May	2007 February	2006 November
2006 August	2006 May	2006 February	2005 November
2005 August	2005 June	2005 February	2004 November
2004 August	2004 April	2004 February	2003 December
2003 November	2003 October	2003 August	2003 July
2003 June	2003 April	2002 November	

6.3 Latest Enhancements

This release is scheduled for the September 23, 2007 install. This September release consists of updating the DDC 22 and Abridged 14 databases in WebDewey and Abridged WebDewey respectively. These database updates contain the latest changes to the DDC and monthly postings (New and changed entries) for May 2007, June 2007, and July 2007.

This September 2007 release includes:

- All updates to Dewey Decimal Classification, Edition 22 and Abridged 14 through August 2007 (corrections, new developments, new built numbers, and additional electronic index terms).

- Thousands of Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) that have been statistically mapped to Dewey numbers from records in WorldCat (the OCLC Online Union Catalog) and intellectually mapped by DDC editors.

- Thousands of Relative Index terms and built numbers not available in print.

- Links from mapped LCSH to the LCSH authority records.

- Selected mappings from Medical Subject Headings (MeSH).

- LCSH that have been intellectually mapped to Dewey headings by DDC editors, including mappings to Abridged Edition 13 numbers from the OCLC publication, Subject Headings for Children.

- Mappings between abridged Dewey numbers and the 2005 update to the 18th edition of H.W. Wilson's Sears List of Subject Headings.

The next Dewey Services quarterly release is scheduled for December, 2007.

6.4 Subscribe to WebDewey

A WebDewey subscription can begin at any time and extends for one year from the starting date. Requires an annual fee only; no per-use charges. It is available on a single-user or site-license basis.

There are two ways to order:
- Online using OCLC's secure Web store
- By mail or fax using a printed order form

WebDewey is available on an annual subscription basis, according to the table below.

Product	Type of License	Subscription Price
WebDewey (OCLC Cataloging Services Edition)	Single User (for use by one staff member)	$250.00/year
	Site License (for use by 2-9 staff members)	$550.00/year
	Site License (for use by 10+ staff members)	$825.00/year
WebDewey	Single User (for use by one staff member)	$300.00/year
	Site License (for use by 2-9 staff members)	$665.00/year
	Site License (for use by 10+ staff members)	$975.00/year
Abridged WebDewey (OCLC Cataloging Services Edition)	Single User (for use by one staff member)	$72.00/year
	Site License (for use by 2-9 staff members)	$165.00/year
	Site License (for use by 10+ staff members)	$225.00/year
Abridged WebDewey	Single User (for use by one staff member)	$82.00/year
	Site License (for use by 2-9 staff members)	$200.00/year
	Site License (for use by 10+ staff members)	$275.00/year

7. Conclusion

At present the number of subjects is large, and the subjects exist in varied relationships. New subjects keep on appearing from time to time. The universe of subject has been become increasingly dynamic. A given classification scheme can be best suited to meet the onslaught of the universe of subjects at that time, but not later to the same extent. Due to increasingly dynamic nature of universe of subjects, it becomes essential that a scheme is revised constantly to keep pace with growing universe of subjects. For this purpose, a scheme needs to be institutionalized. The survival of the scheme will largely depend upon the health of the institution looking after it. To cope up with the alarmingly increasing nature of the universe of subjects, the WebDewey has been continuously revised. WebDewey has more numbers than the print version, not only being more current (it is updated quarterly) but also including more built numbers. This means accommodating new topics, as well as revising existing schedules to reflect new views of the field or to reduce bias. Above all, WebDewey complements the print volumes, but does not completely substitute for them.

Reference

1. BLOOMBERG, Marty and WEBER, Hans (1976), An introduction to classification and number building in Dewey. Littleton, Colo., Libraries Unlimited.

2. BAKEWELL, K B G (1978), The Dewey decimal classification. In his: *Classification and indexing practice*. London, Clive Bingley. 13-37 p.

3. KUMAR, P. G. S. (2004), Schemes of classification. In his: *A student's manual of library and information science*. 2nd ed. Delhi, B. R. Publishing. 411-428 p.

4. http://www.oclc.org/dewey/default.htm

5. http://www.oclc.org/dewey/versions/default.htm

6. http://www.oclc.org/dewey/updates/default.htm

7. http://www.oclc.org/dewey/versions/webdewey/

8. http://www.oclc.org/dewey/versions/ddc22print/default.htm

9. http://www.oclc.org/dewey/versions/abridgedwebdewey/default.htm

10. http://www.oclc.org/connexion/

11. https://www3.oclc.org/dewey/webdewey.asp

12. https://www3.oclc.org/dewey/abrwebdewey.asp

13. http://www.slais.ubc.ca/courses/libr517/02-03-wt2/projects/dewey/

14. http://www.mtsu.edu/~vvesper/dewey.htm

15. http://connexion.oclc.org/

ABOUT AUTHORS

Mr. Apurba Jyoti Majumder (B.Sc., MLISc., JRF) did his graduation in Zoology & completed his MLISc. in 2007 from Gauhati University with 1st class 1st rank. He has successfully cleared UGC/ NET (June, 2006) and selected for JRF (December, 2006). He is also pursuing Certificate in French & PGDCA from GU. His areas of interest are library automation, internet, e-journals, library software etc.

Mr. Gautam Kumar Sarma (B.Sc., MLISc.) did his graduation in Zoology & completed his MLISc. in 2007 from Gauhati University. He is working as the Librarian i/c in PGCS, Gauhati University.