Principles of Classification

ALCTS WEBINAR
LAI MA
SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
INDIANA UNIVERSITY-BLOOMINGTON
LAMA@INDIANA.EDU
NOVEMBER 12, 2012
TO CLASSIFY IS HUMAN!

Group 1
Apple  Broccoli  Orange  Pear  Grape  Pineapple  Mango  Kiwi
Banana  Cantaloupe  Watermelon  Cherry

Group 2
Dublin  London  Paris  Indianapolis  Rome  Berlin  Madrid
Venice  Copenhagen  Hamburg  Lyon

Group 3
Dog  Snake  Dolphin  Elephant  Monkey  Cheetah  Deer
Kangaroo  Bear  Beaver  Tiger  Cow  Donkey
The Knowledge Universe

Source: http://acrosstheuniverse.blogs.nytimes.com/
Library of Congress Classification

History of LCC

- The Library of Congress was founded by order of Congress in January 1802, “An Act concerning the Library for the Use of both Houses of Congress”
- Subject approach was applied in 1812, adaptation of the classification schedule developed by the Library Company of Philadelphia
- Library of Congress was burned in 1814. Thomas Jefferson’s collection was purchased. Charles Cutter’s Expansive Classification was chosen and modified for organizing the collection
- A new classification system specially for the Library of Congress developed in 1901
the scheme adopted has been devised with reference

- (1) to the character and probable development of our own collections,
- (2) to its operation by our own staff,
- (3) to the characters and habits of our own readers, and
- (4) to the usages in vogue here...

There was no exception that the scheme would be adopted by other libraries; much less was there any profession that it would be suited to their needs.”

-Herbert Putnam, 1916
Literary Warrant as a Principle

Literary warrant

- Classes are created to cope with the literature that must be classified by the scheme, rather than on the basis of any theoretical analysis of knowledge
  - Strong US bias
  - Very detailed in subjects such as law, politics and administration, military and naval science
  - Less detailed in science and technology
An enumerative classification system

Library of Congress Classification
- List all possible classes
- Compound subjects are pre-coordinated and listed
- Classes cannot be constructed by the indexer
- Extensive repetition of concepts
- Broad and shallow classification
LCC notation

- Typically consists of two letters and a number from 1 to 9999
- Three letters may be used for a very detailed class
- New classes are inserted into gaps between classes in use

http://library.williams.edu/memex/318/
Dewey Decimal Classification

History of DDC

- First published anonymously in 1876 under the title *A Classification and Subject Index for Cataloging and Arranging the Books and Pamphlets of a Library*
- An enumerative classification system with analytico-synthetic characteristics
Organization of DDC

Notation and Number building
Museum in Pennsylvania

708  Galleries, museums, private collections of fine and decorative arts
708.1  North America
708.14  (United States)
708.148 Galleries, museums, private collections of fine and decorative arts in Pennsylvania (Table 2: “748”)
Representation and Organization

Who?  What?  Where?
Selected Bibliography