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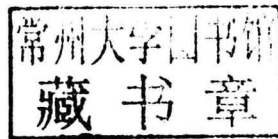
GUIDE TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION

Lois Mai Chan, Sheila S. Intner, and Jean Weihs

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and Jean Weihs



Library and Information Science Text Series



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Preface

It is not easy to express the mixed feelings that accompany publication of this edition of *A Guide to the Library of Congress Classification*. The *Guide* was initiated in 1968 by John Immroth and updated by him in 1971. Subsequently, my esteemed colleague Lois Mai Chan revised it three times for editions issued in 1980, 1990, and 1999. *A Guide to the Library of Congress Classification* is the principal exposition of the classification relied upon by those new to it—students, staff members, and interested users—for the knowledge they need to use it most effectively. Dr. Chan continued the work of updating the 1999 edition in the years that followed, but she died on August 20, 2014, before her work was complete. Dr. Chan's husband, S. K. Chan, and the *Guide*'s publisher, Libraries Unlimited/ABC-CLIO, asked me, along with my collaborator, Jean Weihs, to finish the work Dr. Chan began in preparing this sixth edition.

We have endeavored to follow Dr. Chan's lead as well as to incorporate new content that is now standard. In particular, recent changes in descriptive cataloging have impacted the text. For example, the terms "main entry" and "uniform title" have been replaced by "authorized access point" and "preferred title," respectively. In this book, we use "first access point" in place of "main entry," because "authorized access point"—the term closest to "main entry" defined in the current descriptive cataloging rules, *Resource Description and Access* (RDA)—indicates no rank order for the access points of a resource that has more than one, but only one such access point can be used to create call numbers. We use the term "resource(s)" for "material(s)," which is now standard cataloging terminology. With a small number of exceptions, the examples in the book have been taken from post-2000 catalog records in the Library of Congress MARC database. Changes in descriptive cataloging are particularly obvious in post-2013 records, when RDA was adopted.

Library of Congress Classification (LC Classification) is now part of an online resource titled *Classification Plus* obtained by subscription through the Library's Cataloging Distribution Service. However, the Library of Congress also has made it possible for everyone with access to the Internet to obtain downloadable files of the entire classification free of charge, including the outline, schedules, tables, and

policy documents that serve as a user manual to the system. Schedules in these files are current as of this writing and are updated regularly. In addition, helpful manuals such as the *Classification and Shelflisting Manual* are also available online from the Library of Congress's website, www.loc.gov.

In this book, as in the fifth edition, chapter 1 introduces the classification and provides a brief history of its development. Chapter 2 covers the book's principles, structure, and format; chapter 3 describes its notation, and chapter 4 explains its tables. Chapter 5 discusses assigning class numbers, and it completes the first part of the book. In the second part of the book, chapters 6 and 7 move to a more specific level. Chapter 6 covers the 21 individual schedules from A to Z in greater detail, and chapter 7 explains how specific types of resources are classified, including biographies, serials (now known as "continuing resources"), collections, corporate body publications, resources from special sources, related works, abstracts, incunabula, "bound with" books, nonprint resources, and resources intended for children and youth. In the closing part of the book, chapter 8 offers a brief speculation about the future of LC Classification.

Jean and I are grateful to S. K. Chan for entrusting us with Dr. Chan's notes and enabling us to work with them. Professor Karen Markey of the University of Michigan's School of Information and Dr. Susan Lazingier of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem gave us an enormous amount of help by reading the draft of the manuscript and giving us valuable comments. We are very grateful for their contributions. Any errors of omission or commission that appear in the book are entirely our responsibility, and I urge readers to contact me with their findings so they can be corrected, at shemat@aol.com.

Classification is a labor undertaken to save the people who use library resources—both scholarly and popular resources—the time and effort it takes to locate what they want from among the enormous number of resources available to them. Ever since the advent of the Internet, the collections of many thousands of the world's great libraries are now within reach, intensifying and complicating the task. Jean and I sincerely hope this book empowers its readers to work with LC Classification effectively and that this, in turn, adds measurably to their success in using their libraries.

Sheila S. Intner
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Chapter 1

Introduction

OVERVIEW

The Library of Congress Classification (LC Classification) was developed for the Library of Congress's (LC's) own use. However, it has been adopted by many other libraries and is now one of the most widely used classification systems, particularly among large academic and research libraries in the United States and around the world. Several major factors have contributed to its wide acceptance:

1. Its wide-ranging and thorough coverage;
2. Its continuous revision;
3. Its dependability (in respect to maintenance) through its support by LC;
4. Its flexible, very hospitable, and expandable notation (that is, its book numbering or labeling system);
5. Its base in literary warrant (the term "literary warrant" in the context of library classification indicates that new topics are added to the schedules when they are needed to reflect the subject content of the literature or materials being cataloged or classified);
6. The wide accessibility of its schedules, in both electronic and print versions; and
7. The fact that LC Classification class numbers, as well as LC subject headings, appear on almost all LC cataloging records and many records from other sources in OCLC's WorldCat. In addition, the system holds promise as an important element in the development of new systems to improve retrieval on the Internet and in the OPAC (online catalog).

To date, the LC Classification has been applied primarily in the library environment, where, traditionally, its notation has provided a sequence for the shelf-arrangement

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of library resources. In this role, the LC Classification has had an information retrieval function—generations of library users have relied on classification as a means of locating wanted material on shelves and have used shelf browsing as one of the ways they can discover related resources.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION

The LC Classification, the system by which LC organizes its own collection, was first articulated more than 100 years ago. It has been maintained and updated continuously by LC ever since. Initially, it was designed and developed to accommodate LC's own extensive research collection. Eventually, many other large American academic and research libraries adopted the system for their own use; so have a number of general libraries. Currently, many foreign libraries use the system as well.

There are several reasons for the system's popularity. Doubtless, one of the most important is that over the years, LC has made its cataloging data easily available to outsiders, first through printed cards and catalogs, and later—since the inception of its MARC (MACHine-Readable Cataloging) system in the late 1960s—by means of magnetic tapes and electronic distribution through networks such as OCLC, a cooperative serving libraries worldwide. Currently, LC MARC records are accessible on the Internet through LC's online catalog and OCLC's WorldCat (a catalog containing millions of records contributed by OCLC members). As a result, LC MARC records are now the backbone of most online library catalogs, including those that organize their collections by other classification systems.

Although initially, classification has been used in libraries primarily as a shelving device offering limited subject access through shelf browsing, it has proven a useful retrieval tool that offers sophisticated search options in the online environment. Currently, given the wide availability of MARC records, LC Classification information plays an important role in making the contents of libraries accessible.

The fact that all users of an information system need to know that system well to use it effectively is one of the premises that underlie this book. Another is that knowing how a system was conceived and how it developed are essential to understanding it fully. Therefore, in discussing the LC Classification—its application in bibliographical control and its important role in enhanced online retrieval—this book begins with the early history of the system and a brief account of how it has evolved to date.

Earliest Systems

The Library of Congress was established in 1800 when the American legislature was preparing to move from Philadelphia to the new capital city of Washington, D.C. Before that time, members of the U.S. Congress used libraries in New York and Philadelphia, namely, the New York Society Library and the Library Company of Philadelphia. Section five of "An Act to Make Further Provision for the Removal and Accommodation of the Government of the United States," signed by President John Adams on April 24, 1800, provided a sum of \$5,000 "for the purchase of such books as may be necessary for the use of Congress and the said city of Washington, and for fitting up a suitable apartment for containing them."¹