

Notes on Operations

Classifying Newspapers Using Dewey Decimal Classification

Tamara J. Kuhn

Librarians facing the decision of whether or not to classify a newspaper collection must consider the basic research needs of patrons. Users primarily access newspapers by geographic location (more specifically, by city of publication), and by date. Librarians also must consider that newspapers are serials and that classifying newspapers presents the same challenges as classifying general serials. Multiple title changes and unique relationships among newspapers can complicate the application of a classification system to a newspaper collection. Keeping newspaper families together chronologically on shelves is important when locating titles. The Dewey Decimal Classification system, with a few modifications, can be used optimally to classify a newspaper collection. Knowing that classification can function as an efficient organization method for a newspaper collection makes a library's decision of whether or not to classify easier.

The Illinois Newspaper Project (INP) moved to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) in January 1996 to begin cataloging the library's United States newspaper collection. As a part of the United States Newspaper Program (USNP) funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, INP shifted its focus from cataloging the extensive Illinois newspaper collection at the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, Illinois, to cataloging a much broader United States collection in one of the largest academic libraries in the nation.

One major obstacle discovered while evaluating the UIUC newspaper collection was the need to classify newspapers as well as provide description and subject

analysis. Existing rules and guidelines provided by USNP and CONSER governed the latter two elements, but classifying newspapers was an entirely new realm. Because INP is only cataloging United States newspapers, I will focus on classifying U.S. titles.

NEWSPAPERS AS SERIALS

Newspapers are a specific form of serial, and the question of whether or not to classify a serials collection applies directly to a newspaper collection. Much has been written on classifying serials and periodicals, and authors debate the pros and cons of arranging a serials collection in call number order. In an article discussing

whether or not to classify serials, Smith (1978, 372) wrote, "Classification is indeed a very basic library approach to materials, and it cannot be overlooked. Serials collections and their use are much too important to be given the short shrift. Classification is imperative." Newspapers need to be given the same consideration in library collections as other materials, so a library's decision to classify serials should also include newspapers.

Smith (1978) argued that serials should be classified for seven reasons, many of which are still relevant today:

1. Materials on the same subject should be kept together, regardless of type, to facilitate subject access and browsing.
2. Classification encourages broader use of serials by treating them like other materials.
3. Serials reference work will be aided by classification.
4. Sorting call numbers can more easily produce subject aids and guides.
5. Reshelving becomes a mechanical task, and shelvers are not required to know special organization rules.
6. Materials that have undergone title changes can remain on the shelves together.
7. Classification can help prevent overcrowding in the subject catalog due to successive entry cataloging.

Bross (1990) listed some benefits of classifying a periodical collection (178): "A classification system enables a library to keep volumes of the same periodical together on the shelves in spite of title changes." Newspapers are notorious for changing titles many times within a lifespan, and using a classification system to organize a newspaper collection is one way to manage title changes on shelves and in local catalogs. Bross also stated (178) that "another benefit is the assistance a classification number can give staff/patrons who may be faced with the problems of correlating catalog entries, spine titles, filing rules, and new cataloging codes." Newspapers often merge to become new bibliographic entities or combine in various ways to form different manifestations of an earlier title. Clas-

sifying newspapers can help staff and patrons navigate through shelves without having constantly to consult the catalog for exact titles and title changes. Finding newspapers becomes a matter of following a base call number instead of remembering all of the various titles within a newspaper's lifespan.

CLASSIFYING NEWSPAPERS AT UIUC

Patrons access newspapers primarily by place of publication. Many times a researcher does not have a specific newspaper title in mind to fill an information need, but instead knows that a newspaper from a given area likely will contain the needed information. Historians, for example, can utilize newspapers from different geographic locations to compare how an event was covered at the time that it occurred. Location and date are most important in this type of reference request. Basing classification on geographic location can play a vital role in organizing and accessing a newspaper collection to expedite a researcher's information need. Arranging a newspaper collection geographically is logical in relation to the manner in which newspapers are requested by patrons.

In many catalogs, the call number serves as an additional access point. When accessing the UIUC newspaper collection, searching the catalog by call number is a very important function because most materials are housed in closed stacks areas. Patrons who know a general call number can search that number and browse the catalog by shelf arrangement. This serves them as if they were browsing the shelves in search of other newspaper titles from the same geographic area. In collections that allow patrons to retrieve their own materials, arranging newspapers geographically expressed through classification will fulfill a basic research need.

Organizing title changes through classification facilitates browsing a newspaper collection. Patrons can find the classification number of a title in the middle of a newspaper family and use that number as an entry point to the shelves. Once patrons locate that call number on the

shelves, they can easily move from title to title within that family without having to know the intricacies of title changes.

The decision to classify the newspaper collection at the UIUC library was compounded by the mechanics of the local online catalog. The Full Bibliographic Record/Library Computer System (FBR/LCS), the online catalog that UIUC used at the time this article was written, required a call number to function properly. The catalog consisted of two separate databases and software programs; one for bibliographic records (FBR) and one for holdings records (LCS). The linking component in this system was the classification number, and without one, patrons could not move easily between bibliographic and holdings records. Because of this (in addition to the need for geographic arrangement), it became clear that classification was essential in providing local access to the UIUC newspaper collection.

USING THE DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Librarians at the UIUC library classify the general collection using Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), and the newspaper collection needed to fit into this scheme. Before evaluating the classification scheme in relation to organizing newspapers, a literature search revealed that only one article had been written concerning newspaper classification, and it dealt only with Library of Congress classification (Krissiep 1991). There were no previously published articles on using DDC to classify a newspaper collection to help guide the INP. Few articles have been written concerning newspaper classification because newspaper cataloging is relatively new to librarianship and few newspaper collections are currently classified.

The USNP, formalized in 1984, was the first coordinated nationwide effort to catalog newspaper collections. Rules specific to newspaper description and subject analysis were established to facilitate this program (Field 1986). Classification, however, was not a formal part of the USNP.

Before examining DDC's application

to newspapers, it was important to look at the existing organization of the UIUC newspaper collection. Like many newspaper collections, UIUC's collection was arranged primarily by geographic location. The first level of geographic organization was by country. Then the newspapers were organized alphabetically by state, and then alphabetically by city within each state. The next element of organization was by title. A common title, which is a shortened form in popular use by the public that does not reflect title changes, had been assigned to most newspapers and alphabetized within each city. For example, the *Chicago Sun-Times* underwent six title changes (including one merger) between 1941 and the present; however, the paper is commonly known as the *Chicago Sun-Times* or the *Sun-Times*. All boxes of microfilm for the *Sun-Times* held in the UIUC newspaper collection were labeled as *Chicago Sun-Times*, without acknowledging the numerous title changes.

After the alphabetization of each common title within its city, newspapers were arranged chronologically. This organization system became the basis for evaluating DDC to see how useful the classification scheme could be in organizing a newspaper collection.

EVALUATING DDC IN RELATION TO A NEWSPAPER COLLECTION

The evaluation uncovered both strengths and limitations. The main strength of the DDC to classify a newspaper collection is its geographic organization capability in applying Table 2: Geographic Areas, Periods, Persons. It is possible to build a number expressing country, state, region, and county. Figures 1-4 illustrate the application of Table 2. Another DDC strength is that all general newspapers can be found within a small range of numbers. General newspapers from the United States are found in the 071 classification number. In an open stacks collection, this will facilitate browsing.

One limitation was found, but it proved to be crucial in applying DDC in a strict manner. In most cases, geographic

Champaign daily news

Merged with: Champaign daily gazette (Champaign, Ill. : 1883)

To form: Champaign news-gazette

Vol. 1, no. 1 (July 29, 1895)-v. 25, no. 116 (Dec. 13, 1919)

071 Journalism and newspapers in North America
 .7366 Journalism and newspapers in the United States
 Number from Table 2 representing Champaign County,
 Illinois (the first 7 is dropped according to the
 instructions in .3-.9)

C357 Cutter number representing Champaign (city of publication)
 cd Workmark taken from Champaign daily news

Figure 1. Application of DDC, Modified Cutter and Workmark.

arrangement in the scheme only allows access as far as the county level within the United States. Larger cities such as Chicago or New York have their own number in Table 2, but almost all average- to small-sized cities do not. Because of this, the city of publication would be eliminated from the organization of the collection, and the final level of geographic arrangement for a U.S. newspaper would be the county. Patrons very rarely request newspapers by county, and frequently request them by city. For example, a patron is more likely to ask for newspapers from Springfield, Illinois than from Sangamon County, Illinois.

Traditionally, the cutter number is created based on the main entry of a catalog record, and for newspaper records the main entry is always the title, either in the form of the title proper or a uniform title. Using DDC in a strict manner and cutting traditionally would make the title more important in the arrangement than the city. For example, if a strict and traditional method of applying DDC and cutting were to be used to classify a newspaper collection, all newspapers

from Cook County, Illinois outside of Chicago would be arranged by title with no city arrangement whatsoever. Hundreds of Chicago suburban newspapers would file alphabetically by title beneath the county arrangement. Skokie newspapers would be mixed alphabetically by title with Calumet City papers and so forth. However, newspapers from Chicago would be separated from other papers from Cook County, because Chicago has its own number in Table 2. No city access is uniformly available through strict use of DDC and traditional cutting methods.

MODIFYING THE TRADITIONAL

After finding this major stumbling block, it became apparent that DDC had to be modified to make it a sensible choice for classifying a newspaper collection. It was possible to use certain elements in a strict manner, though. The subject number 071 and the use of Table 2 were applied as instructed in the DDC schedules. As stated above, this application generally only allows state, region, and county arrangement.

The cutting method was modified to

Champaign daily gazette (Champaign, Ill. : 1883)

Merged with: Champaign daily news

To form: Champaign news-gazette

Vol. 1, no. 1 (Nov. 5, 1883)-<no designation (Dec. 11, 1919)>

071 Journalism and newspapers in North America
 .7366 Journalism and newspapers in the United States
 Number from Table 2 representing Champaign County,
 Illinois (the first 7 is dropped according to the
 instructions in .3-.9)

C357 Cutter number representing Champaign (city of publication)
 cda Workmark taken from Champaign daily gazette
 The workmark "cda" is used because "cd" already represents
 Champaign daily news cataloged prior to this title.

Figure 2. Application of DDC, Modified Cutter and Workmark.

Champaign news-gazette

Formed by the union of: Champaign daily news

And: Champaign daily gazette (Champaign, Ill. : 1883)

Continued by: Champaign-Urbana news-gazette (Champaign, Ill. : 1934)

Vol. 25, no. 117 (Dec. 14, 1919)-v. 39, no. 305 (July, 27, 1934)

- 071 Journalism and newspapers in North America
 .7366 Journalism and newspapers in the United States
 Number from Table 2 representing Champaign County,
 Illinois
 (the first 7 is dropped according to the instructions in
 .3-.9)
- C357 Cutter number representing Champaign (city of publication)
 cd Workmark from previous title (Champaign daily news)
 1 Numeric extension used to keep title changes filing
 chronologically
-

Figure 3. Application of DDC, Modified Cutter and Workmark.

make certain that the city of publication was included in the classification arrangement. Choosing a cutter number based on the newspaper's place of publication instead of main entry (title for newspaper records) ensures that the city is a standard part of the classification number. This provides the city level of geographic arrangement that is so important to newspaper organization. With this modification, the classification number parallels the organization of the hierarchical place name added entry, which is a core element in newspaper cataloging. The first geographic area in this data element is country. The second area is state. The third area is county, and the last area is city.

Generally, the cutter number is based on the place of publication found in the imprint. A newspaper can change places of publication within its lifetime, in which case it is up to the cataloger to decide which place of publication to use for the basis of the cutter number. For example,

the title *Times of Havana* began publication in Havana, Cuba, on February 4, 1957, but by April 20, 1961, it had moved to Miami, Florida. The UIUC library holds issues beginning on April 20, 1961, but nothing before that date. It was logical to cutter this title based on Miami, Florida, rather than Havana, Cuba, given that none of the library's holdings represent the time period in which this title was published in Havana.

The next element in the classification number remained the same as in a traditional application. The workmark is assigned from the title of the newspaper. This provides the alphabetical arrangement by title within the city of publication that is generally expected in newspaper organization. Because so many newspaper titles begin with a city name (*Champaign News-Gazette* from Champaign, Ill.) or frequency (*Chicago's Daily Inter Ocean*), a guideline was established to keep workmarks from becoming too long:

Champaign-Urbana news-gazette (Champaign, Ill. : 1934)

Continues: Champaign news-gazette

Vol. 39, no. 306 (July 29, 1934)-v. 41, no. 333 (July 18, 1936)

- 071 Journalism and newspapers in North America
 .7366 Journalism and newspapers in the United States
 Number from Table 2 representing Champaign County,
 Illinois (the first 7 is dropped according to the
 instructions in .3-.9)
- C357 Cutter number representing Champaign (city of publica-
 tion)
 cd Workmark from previous title (Champaign daily news)
 2 Numeric extension used to keep title changes filing
 chronologically
-

Figure 4. Application of DDC, Modified Cutter and Workmark.

Generally, if a title begins with a city name or a frequency, we use the first letter of the first word then skip to the first letter of the second word. A workmark should not extend beyond three characters, if possible. Figures 1–2 provide examples of distinguishing workmarks.

Because newspapers change titles frequently, the last element in the classification number was developed to handle title change situations and to make sure that newspapers remained in chronological order. When a title change occurs, a numeric extension is added to the classification number of the earlier title following the workmark. The first time a title changes, a "1" is added to the previous classification number. The next time the title changes, a "2" is added, and so forth. This keeps titles together in chronological order even when publishers decide to change the title on the newspaper masthead.

In cases of mergers, absorptions, or other complex relationships, the designation or numbering system can act as a

pointer. For example, when two newspapers merge to form another newspaper, a cataloger has three possibilities for classifying the later title. An extension can be added to the classification number of the first merger title, an extension can be added to the classification number of the second merger title, or a completely new classification number can be created for the newly formed title. In this situation, the numbering system can offer clues. If one designation is continued by the later title, and the other designation dies with its title, then it is best to continue the classification number corresponding to the title whose designation continues. Figures 1–3 illustrate this concept. On the other hand, if neither designation from the merging titles continue and a new numbering system emerges, it might be best to create a new classification number altogether based on the new title. Often these tough situations are best resolved based on the cataloger's judgment and what works best within a collection.

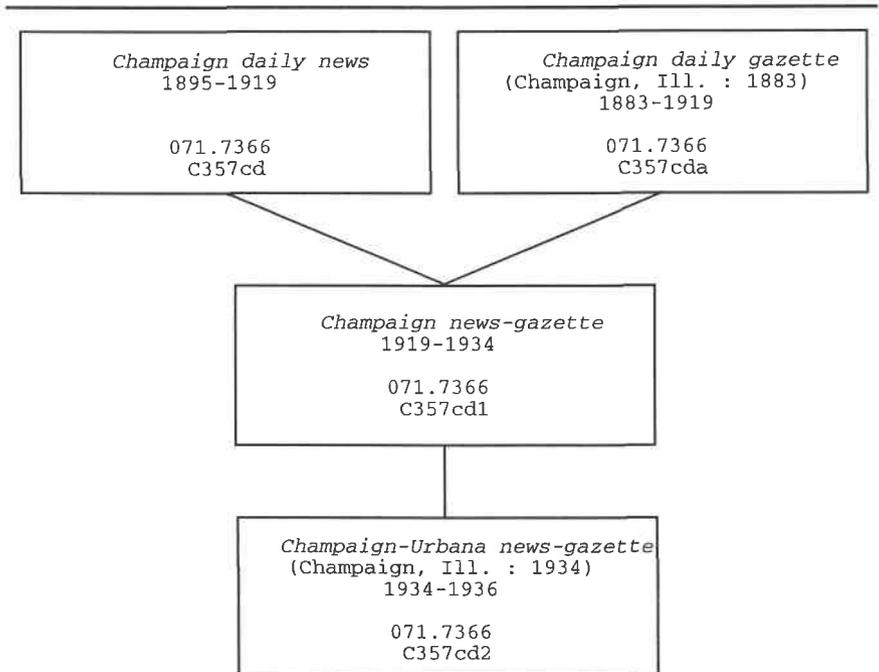


Figure 5. Family Tree for the *News-Gazette* from Champaign, Illinois.

Illinois labor press

From East St. Louis, Illinois

331	Labor economics
.8809	Historical, geographic, persons treatment of labor unions
773	Number from Table 2 representing Illinois
Ea79	Cutter number representing East St. Louis (city of publication)
i	Workmark taken from Illinois labor press

Figure 6. Application of DDC, Modified Cutter and Workmark to Genre Newspapers.

Figure 5 shows a portion of the newspaper family tree for the *News-Gazette* from Champaign, Illinois. Figures 1 through 4 illustrate each title and its assigned classification number. Together they demonstrate the use of DDC, the modified cutting method, workmark, and numeric extension to classify a newspaper set.

GENRE NEWSPAPERS

Not all newspapers carry only general news and serve a geographic area. Some newspapers cover specific topics and represent certain genres, such as religious newspapers or labor newspapers. In cases like this, the genre or subject orientation of the newspaper is often more important to researchers and should supercede the place of publication as the primary focus of organization. It is best to classify genre newspapers within the appropriate subject area from the DDC schedules.

Geographic coverage is still important in most topical newspapers, but the subject of the newspaper needs to be expressed through the base classification number. Whenever possible, use Table 2 to make sure that any geographic coverage is also expressed. This provides geographic organization to a genre newspaper collection. Using the same modified cutter, workmark, and numeric extension guidelines that were developed for gen-

eral newspapers will keep the classification method consistent. It will also provide the basic geographic organization that a newspaper collection needs. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate two genre titles and their assigned classification numbers.

OBSERVATIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION

After the INP began classifying the UIUC newspaper collection, the Newspaper Library started shifting the microfilm collection into call number order. It would have taken much effort and resources to shift close to 75,000 reels of microfilm at one time, so the library staff decided to shift the newspaper microfilm reels for each state as INP finished cataloging them. This distributed the work effort of this formidable task and broke up the process into logical phases. Each state was organized into call number order, but the shelving locations for each state remained in alphabetical order. It is possible that the collection can be later shifted into strict call number order.

Because the Newspaper Library microfilm collection is housed in a closed stacks area, staff and student employees must retrieve all requested film for patrons. Now that the U.S. collection is cataloged and classified, patrons are able to find titles and call numbers more independently than before. Patrons can

Jewish world (Fairview Heights, Ill.)

296	Judaism
.09	Historical, geographic, persons treatment
77389	Number from Table 2 representing Saint Clair County, Illinois
F168	Cutter number representing Fairview Heights (city of publication)
j	Workmark taken from Jewish world

Figure 7. Application of DDC, Modified Cutter and Workmark to Genre Newspapers.

provide the Newspaper Library staff with a call number to expedite film retrieval. By relying on call numbers, there is not as much room for error in retrieval as when microfilm was completely arranged alphabetically by geographic location. Staff, however, must know a title's state of publication before the call number can be used for locating the film. This sometimes slows the retrieval process. Arranging a newspaper collection completely by call number would alleviate this additional step.

Patrons do not always understand the concept of a newspaper title change and provide the Newspaper Library staff with a call number of a preceding or succeeding title to the title they want specifically. Staff and student employees know, however, that the call number can provide an entry point to the shelves for that newspaper family. They can rely on the extension numbers to move easily through title changes on the shelves without knowing the titles themselves.

Staff members have noticed a difference in the time it takes for student employees to reshelve microfilm reels. Employees do not have to pre-arrange microfilm geographically as much as before, because there is a more systematic arrangement provided by call number organization. There are also fewer incidents of microfilm being shelved incorrectly since the collection has been shifted into call number order, according to staff. Student employees are instructed to match the call number to the correct shelf location and then check the exact title against neighboring film reels. This provides a mechanism for accuracy when shelving microfilm.

CONCLUSION

Librarians facing the decision of whether or not to classify a newspaper collection must consider patrons' basic research needs. Users primarily access newspapers by geographic location, more specifically by city of publication, and by date. Geo-

graphic organization was the primary focus when evaluating DDC as the classification scheme to use for the UIUC newspaper collection. Applying DDC in a strict manner cannot express consistently the city of publication of a newspaper title, which is so important in meeting users' needs. Modifying the traditional use of the cutter number can overcome DDC's limited geographic expression.

Librarians also must consider that newspapers are serials and that classifying newspapers presents the same challenges as classifying general serials. Multiple title changes and unique relationships among newspapers can complicate the application of a classification scheme to a newspaper collection. Keeping newspaper families together chronologically on shelves is important when locating titles. It is crucial that patrons and staff have the ability to browse the shelves without knowing the intricacies of every title change that occurs in the lifespan of a newspaper family. The addition of a numeric extension to a base call number provides chronological order to the classification scheme.

DDC, with a few modifications, can be used optimally to classify a newspaper collection. Knowing that classification can function as an organization method for a newspaper collection makes a library's decision of whether or not to classify easier.

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