

Why Do You Still Use Dewey?

Academic Libraries That Continue with Dewey Decimal Classification

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Reclassification was a popular trend during the 1960s and 1970s for many academic libraries wanting to change from Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) to Library of Congress (LC) Classification. In 2002, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale's Morris Library changed from DDC to LC. If one academic library recently converted, might other DDC academic libraries consider switching, too? Conversely, for those academic libraries that remain with DDC, what are the reasons they continue with it? A survey of thirty-four DDC academic libraries in the United States and Canada determined what factors influence these libraries to continue using DDC, and if reclassification is something they have considered or are considering. The survey also investigated whether patrons of these DDC libraries prefer LC and if their preference influences the library's decision to reclassify. Results from the survey indicate that the issue of reclassification is being considered by some of these libraries even though, overall, they are satisfied with DDC. The study was unable to determine if patrons' preference for a classification scheme influenced a library's decision to reclassify.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, reclassification of library collections from the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) to the Library of Congress (LC) Classification was a major trend in academic libraries, primarily for the economic reasons of improving efficiency in cataloging and reducing processing costs. Many of the libraries that did convert to LC were left with split collections when reclassification projects were ended because of decreased budgets. As the trend to reclassify faded, new trends took its place, beginning with automating library functions and later providing electronic access of information via the Internet. Reclassification appeared to be as passé as Melvil Dewey's spelling improvements.

However, is reclassification really obsolete? In 2002, the Morris Library of the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale changed from DDC to LC.¹ If one academic library recently converted from DDC to LC, might other DDC academic libraries be considering switching, too? Conversely, for those academic libraries that remain with DDC, what are the reasons that they continue to do so?

At Oklahoma State University (OSU) Library, a DDC institution and the home of two of the authors of this article, users' awareness of the different classification systems is apparent when faculty and graduate students raise the question, "Why do you continue to use DDC?" That DDC query often

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results in the library administrators having to explain OSU's choice of remaining a DDC library. Do others academic DDC libraries receive similar comments, and do patron preferences for a classification scheme influence a library's decision to reclassify? This paper examines why DDC libraries remain with DDC, the status of reclassification at these institutions in the United States and Canada, and whether libraries consider the patron in reclassification decisions.

Literature Review

The majority of publications on reclassification appeared during the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1990s, the number of articles on the topic dropped considerably, indicating a loss of interest. The call to reclassify was most often expressed in terms of LC advantages over DDC disadvantages. Downey and Taylor both note the efficiency and economy of using LC-produced catalog cards with an LC classification number already assigned. In contrast, only a minority of cards was produced with DDC numbers.²

LC was considered more flexible and expandable, and had shorter numbers than DDC, thus the claim that LC is better suited for academic libraries. Other reasons cited were the numerous revisions in the DDC schedules with each new edition and the local practices that were instituted to compensate for those changes. Without reclassification of the library's existing collection, the new material on the same subject would be scattered.

Later, the influence of the bibliographic utility OCLC aided the cause of switching to LC. Chressanthis notes, "Many libraries thought it a good idea to 'join the bandwagon' and start using LC when joining OCLC."³ She adds that the bibliographic utility provided easier access to LC cataloging and classification numbers than previously available, as well as assistance in retrospective cataloging.⁴ Dougherty stresses the cost factor of reclassification. He notes that the factors influencing a library's decision were size, age, and the organization of the collection, type of library, nature of the building, political environment, and financial support.⁵ Gaines and Chressanthis both emphasize the decisions and planning needed by a library that has already decided to reclassify.⁶

Most of the reclassification literature was written in the context of the card catalog environment. However, Dean compares the steps taken to reclassify in a manual and an automated environment. She concludes that utilizing an automated system to help with a reclassification project would make it more feasible, and thus rekindle an interest in reclassification.⁷

Some libraries did take advantage of the automated environment for reclassification projects. Pattie reports her

institution, the University of Kentucky, used the NOTIS System for their reclassification project.⁸ Other libraries, Pattie notes, such as the Australian National University Law Library, the University of Oregon, and Occidental College, hired vendors for their reclassification projects.⁹ Talmadge notes the decision by the University of Illinois against reclassification to LC was in part a matter of the high cost of converting to LC and not wanting to risk jeopardizing the library's relationship with its faculty by having a split collection, which would be more difficult to use.¹⁰

In addition, LC is not without its own problems. Chressanthis found several reasons: lack of a comprehensive guide to interpret the LC schedules and tables, lack of Cutter numbers in PZ3 and PZ4, the relocation of different class numbers resulting in having to review the number that appeared on the LC printed card in the updated LC schedules, obsolete call numbers reprinted on LC cards, and disagreements with LC's Cuttering and arrangement of translations and other editions to the original work.¹¹ The impact of the user on reclassification was only briefly mentioned, mostly to address the problem of users having to learn two classification schemes for a split collection. However, the issue of the user was raised early by Moriarty, when he observed:

Don't we classify any more to help the reader get books? In reading Thelma Easton's recent survey of the classification situation in our libraries, I was struck by her comment that apparently so few of us professionals today talk about classification to help the reader; we mainly talk about rapid or cheap classification, that is practical reclassification.¹²

Users do seem to show an interest in reclassification. Pattie reports that during the planning of a new library building at the University of Kentucky, the issue of reclassification arose through discussion with faculty and students, much to the surprise of the administration.¹³ Woolf mentions also the support of faculty at Southern Illinois University for their library's switch to LC, but they also raised concerns about having a split collection.¹⁴

Research Methods

A survey consisting of 24 questions with a cover letter was sent out via e-mail to 126 libraries in fall 2003 (see appendix). These libraries were junior, community, private, and technical colleges, with a few major academic research libraries. The survey sample was relatively small, with only 121 United States and 5 Canadian libraries identified. The survey response rate was 26 percent (34 returned responses) with 33 American libraries and 1 Canadian library participating.

The *Statistical Abstract of the United States* reports that in 2000, the total number of academic libraries in the United States and Canada was 4,777, a number that includes junior colleges, colleges, and universities.¹⁵ Attempting to compile a list of DDC libraries to sample from such numerous academic libraries proved to be problematic, as no comprehensive list of DDC academic libraries was found; furthermore, these libraries are in the minority, according to OCLC. In an internal research project several years ago, OCLC reported that only 25 percent of colleges and universities in the United States use DDC, while 95 percent of all public and K–12 schools in the United States use it.¹⁶ Therefore, to help ensure an adequate sample size, a broad, working definition of academic library was used for the survey. An academic library was defined as any library serving a post-secondary education campus.

A starting point for compiling a list of DDC academic libraries was OCLC's DDC Online Catalogs Web site, in which numerous academic libraries in the United States, along with their Web addresses, were listed.¹⁷ OCLC's policy for including these DDC libraries on its Web site is based on a voluntary request on the part of the library to be listed, regardless of whether OCLC initiated the request on its part or whether the library is an OCLC member.¹⁸ Next, the *American Library Directory* was consulted.¹⁹ Although the directory did not provide the needed data on a library's classification scheme, it was helpful to determine a complete list of Canadian libraries. Forest Press, then publisher of the *Dewey Decimal Classification*, provided further assistance in the form of a list of 248 libraries in the United States and Canada subscribing to WebDewey.²⁰ However, the list contained duplicate entries, resulting in an even smaller pool than expected, and the size and type of academic libraries varied considerably.

All surveyed libraries' Web sites were searched to verify that DDC was used as the library's primary classification scheme and for appropriate e-mail addresses of technical services department heads or the equivalent. The technical services supervisors at both of the authors' institutions reviewed drafts of the survey and provided feedback. The survey was divided into three sections. The first section was designed to identify the size of the surveyed libraries' collections and their cataloging practices. The second section addressed the libraries' reasons for continuing with DDC and any past or future plans to convert to LC, and the third section surveyed whether or not users influence a library's classification decisions. A second copy of the survey was sent as a follow-up to those institutions that did not respond to the first mailing. Respondents whose answers to questions needed further clarification were contacted by e-mail.

Analysis of the responses was conducted using two types of statistical tests. A binomial test was performed on

the response values involving two choices, which were usually "yes" or "no." This test determined if the number of responses in each category was statistically significant, or whether the pair of numbers could have been expected to result from any random sample. If the question passed the binomial test, the library's response was considered typical of a DDC academic library.

Some of the questions were asked to elicit a judgment on the importance of a reason. Respondents were to indicate from three options whether the reason was "more important," "less important," or "not a reason at all." These responses were analyzed with the second type of test, the chi-squared, goodness-of-fit test. If the responses passed the test, the authors concluded that a consensus had been reached among libraries about that reason's importance. In general, if the goodness-of-fit test failed, the failure was a pointer that no conclusions could probably be made. However, analysis of the failure led to one of two possibilities: (1) the issue was considered by the library community, but no consensus has been reached on its importance (as passing the goodness-of-fit test requires that the responses be weighted towards one of the choices); rather, each library decided the importance of the issue based on local factors, practices, and issues not replicable or relevant across the DDC library community; or (2) the issue has not been considered by the library community, so the responses to the question would not have been based on a long-standing practice or common knowledge.

The three responses from the goodness-of-fit test were then grouped into two categories, "a reason" and "not a reason" by combining the "more important reason" and "less important reason" categories. A binomial test was performed on these two categories. If the question passed, the response was considered to show a consensus on whether or not the issue was a reason. The importance of the reason was then determined by performing a second binomial test between "more important" and "less important." Sometimes the goodness-of-fit test and the first binomial test provided contradictory results. These cases are discussed within the text of this paper.

Results

The libraries surveyed held a minimum of 35,000 and a maximum of 4,200,000 titles, with a median of 115,000 titles. The mean number of titles was 310,000 and the standard deviation was 720,000. The largest library had a number of titles that was more than five standard deviations beyond the sample mean, but the second largest library had a number of titles that was only one standard deviation beyond the mean. Since the largest library with 4.2 million

titles could be considered an outlier, and therefore not truly representative of the sample, a second set of statistics was calculated. The remaining libraries had a maximum of one million titles, with a median of 110,000; the mean number of titles was 192,000 and the standard deviation was 220,000. This second set indicates that most of the libraries responding were smaller, which is not surprising since many of the libraries were from technical, junior, and community colleges. However, since the data set was rather small and every datum was needed for analysis, the authors decided to include the largest library.

These institutions catalogued a minimum of 1,000 titles per year, and a maximum of 60,000, with a median of 3,500 titles. The mean number of titles catalogued was 7,700 and the standard deviation was 12,400.

Next, the survey asked whether catalogers or paraprofessionals assign the DDC call numbers and how many staff of each type assign call numbers. Nearly half the libraries have catalogers rather than paraprofessionals assigning the call numbers. The minimum number of paraprofessionals who assign call numbers was 0; the maximum, 24; with a median of 0, a mean of 1.5 and a standard deviation of 4.2. The minimum number of professionals who assign call numbers was 0; the maximum, 9; the median, 1; the mean, 1.5; with a standard deviation of 1.6.

Although these were DDC libraries, only 9 libraries classed all their materials in DDC, while the remaining 25 libraries did not. A binomial test reveals there is a significant preference not to classify everything in DDC, $n = 34$, $z = -$

2.74, $p < .05$. The significance holds even when $p < .01$. This indicates the typical DDC library classifies some parts of its collection using other systems.

The survey found that libraries would often use more than one classification system for a given type of material. However, in most cases, one classification system would predominate in that library for a material, and the discussion that follows refers to the predominant use.

Table 1 shows that all thirty-four libraries classify monographs in DDC with a few using LC and the Superintendent of Documents Classification (SUDOC). Libraries also indicated that local schemes were employed for special collections, genealogy, local history, children's literature, fiction, and biography collections.

As for serials, almost one-third of the libraries prefer to use accession numbers or arrange them alphabetically by title rather than assign a DDC number (see table 2).

Certainly, some of these libraries with small collections and staffs do not classify serials in order to save processing time. One library used DDC half of the time and alphabetical arrangement of titles the other half of the time, while 3 libraries did not provide clear answers. Twenty-three libraries catalog their government documents with DDC, while only 10 use SUDOC (see table 3).

The use of DDC instead of SUDOC here probably indicates that for most of these libraries documents are shelved together with the main collection (instead of separately) and are the materials they plan to keep rather than removing them after five years as selective depositories can do. For

Table 1. Libraries' practices for classifying books

	Maximum %	Minimum %	Mean %	Median %	Standard Deviation	No. of Libraries Using Format	% of Libraries Using Format	No. Using for Majority of Items	% Using for Majority of Items
DDC	100.0	70.0	96.6	100.0	8.5	34	100.0	34	100.0
LC	30.0	1.0	12.3	9.0	13.4	4	11.7	0	0
SUDOC	3.0	1.0	1.8	2.0	0.8	5	15.0	0	0
Other	30.0	2.0	9.1	5.0	9.8	10	29.4	0	0

Table 2. Libraries' practices for classifying serials

	Maximum %	Minimum %	Mean %	Median %	Standard Deviation	No. of Libraries Using Format	% of Libraries Using Format	No. Using for Majority of Items	% Using for Majority of Items
DDC	100.0	30.0	91.4	100.0	19.8	21	61.8	19.5*	57.4
LC	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0		1	2.9	0	0
SUDOC	10.0	1.0	4.7	3.0	4.7	3	8.8	0	0
Accn. #	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		2	5.9	2	5.9
Other	100.0	2.0	79.3	100.0	32.6	12	35.3	9.5*	27.9

*One library used Dewey for half its serials and alphabetical arrangement of titles for the other half.

nonprint materials, DDC was the choice of the majority of libraries (see table 4). This may mean that these libraries find DDC easy to use for organizing non-print materials and that using one scheme is more efficient.

Question 6 was one of several questions in the second section for which the statistical results were found to be inconclusive, since they generated a number that could be expected to come up at random. This question, regarding whether or not DDC libraries accept call numbers found on catalog copy, found 22 libraries accepted the number, while 11 libraries did not. Testing at the .05 level of significance, a binomial test reveals there is not a significant preference to accept call numbers found on catalog copy, $n = 33$, $z = 1.91$. However, because the result of the test is so close to the z value, that would pass the test (1.96), the test cannot be taken as decisive. A larger sample may have found the preference to be significant.

Question 7 addressed the shortening of DDC call numbers to a certain number of digits beyond the decimal from numbers on catalog copy. Twenty of the libraries shorten their call numbers, while 14 do not. Testing at the .05 level of significance, a binomial test reveals that there is not a significant preference to shorten DDC call numbers found on catalog copy, $n = 34$, $z = 1.03$. One might conclude that the practice of shortening the DDC number from catalog copy is not a universal practice. For the libraries that did shorten their call numbers, the maximum number of digits shortened to which a call number is shortened is 12, the minimum is 3, with a median of 4, a mean of 5.1, and a standard deviation of 2.3. These libraries probably do this to process materi-

als more quickly through cataloging and onto the shelves. Another possible reason for shortening the number is that DDC numbers can become very long, making them difficult for the user to read. Also, some label printers may only allow a fixed number of digits after the decimal per line.

No statistical conclusions could be drawn from question 10, which asked if libraries use optional DDC numbers (such as numbers in parentheses) for some topics. Eleven libraries use optional numbers, while 20 do not. Testing at the .05 level of significance, a binomial test showed there is not a significant preference, $n = 33$, $z = -1.62$.

All of the libraries surveyed except one use the DDC 21 full edition, the current edition at the time the survey was administered. The one exception was a library that used the current abridged version, the thirteenth DDC edition at the time of the survey. The results indicate that academic libraries use the latest DDC edition and want to stay current with the changes and new additions to DDC numbers. Another possible factor is that libraries that use WebDewey may only have access to the latest version.

The majority of libraries did not use different DDC editions to classify. Only 5 used a different edition, while 29 did not. A binomial test reveals a significant preference to use the same edition, $n = 34$, $z = -4.12$, $p < .05$. The significance holds even when $p < .001$. Efficiency and consistency are probably the reasons that so many of these libraries chose to use the same edition of DDC to classify everything. Using a different DDC edition requires training staff, changing call numbers found on cataloging copy to older edition call numbers, and monitoring staff to meet local practices.

Table 3. Libraries' practices for classifying government documents

	Maximum %	Minimum %	Mean %	Median %	Standard Deviation	No. of Libraries Using Format	% of Libraries Using Format	No. Using for Majority of Items	% Using for Majority of Items
DDC	100.0	2.0	80.2	100.0	37.4	29	85.3	23	67.6
LC	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0		1	2.9	0	0
SUDOC	100.0	43.0	88.5	98.0	17.6	11	32.4	10	29.4
Other	43.0	20.0	31.3	31.0	15.9	2	5.9	0	0

Table 4. Libraries' practices for classifying nonprint materials

	Maximum %	Minimum %	Mean %	Median %	Standard Deviation	No. of Libraries Using Format	% of Libraries Using Format	No. Using for Majority of Items	% Using for Majority of Items
DDC	100.0	5.0	87.3	100.0	23.7	31	91.2	27	79.4
LC	95.0	20.0	48.3	30.0	40.7	3	8.8	1	2.9
SUDOC	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0		1	2.9	1	2.9
Accn. #	55.0	2.0	20.3	15.0	20.6	6	17.6	1	2.9
Other	100.0	2.0	46.2	33.0	41.7	6	17.6	2	5.9

As for the 5 libraries that used a different DDC edition to classify some topics, it was not surprising that music and literature were named as the topics they classify differently. Since the drastic DDC 20 schedule revisions to the 780s for music, libraries had a choice of either assigning the older DDC numbers so the materials would shelve together or using the revised scheme from the new edition, resulting in the scattering of materials. With literature, the problem is the difficulty in following the sometimes lengthy and cumbersome notes for building numbers in table 3, which was expanded in DDC 19 with the supplementary table 3-A. The numbers can also become quite long in both literature and music. The survey did not ask if libraries reclassify their collections when the DDC number is revised.

Only 8 libraries use specialized DDC schedules, and some of those libraries revealed that they had developed their own in-house schedules for certain subjects. Twenty-three libraries do not use specialized schedules. A binomial test reveals a significant preference not to use specialized schedules, $n = 31$, $z = -2.69$, $p < .05$.

The limited use of specialized schedules reflects that, in general, only larger academic libraries would find them useful. Another factor would be the training needed and the efficiency issue of having to interrupt workflow to use them. Nevertheless, numerous libraries commented that they had adapted DDC with locally devised systems for

literature, computer science, special collections, and curriculum materials.

Question 13, in the second section of the survey, was directed at the practical reasons for continuing with DDC and not converting to LC (see tables 5 and 6). For questions 13, 14, and 16, the reasons are discussed in order of how many libraries considered them “more important.” Of the 7 reasons, the data showed the greatest number of libraries (21, or 62 percent) thought that “lack of staff to handle a reclassification project” was the most important reason for continuing with DDC. Libraries showed a significant preference on the question concerning “lack of staff to handle a reclassification project” as a reason for not switching. The binomial tests showed a significant preference for that being a reason, and a significant preference for it being a major reason not to switch.

The goodness-of-fit test showed a significant preference for “lack of resources for a major shift of the collection” as a reason for not switching. The binomial test reveals a significant preference for that being a reason and a significant preference for it being a major reason not to switch.

Another important reason not to switch to LC was “reclassification cost.” The goodness-of-fit test showed a significant preference on the question concerning “reclassification cost” as a reason for not switching. The binomial test reveals a sig-

Table 5. Practical reasons for continuing with DDC

	More important		Less important		Not a reason		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
13a. Lack of resources to shift collections	19	56	6	18	8	24	1	3
13b. Reclassification costs	19	56	6	18	8	24	1	3
13c. Lack of staff	21	62	4	12	8	24	1	3
13d. To avoid a split collection	14	41	7	21	12	35	1	3
13e. Reclassification no longer a priority	14	41	8	24	11	32	1	3
13f. Historical practice of classifying using DDC	15	44	8	24	9	26	2	6
13g. Administration's preference for DDC	8	24	5	15	19	56	2	6

Table 6. Summary of Statistical Tests for Practical Reasons*

	χ^2 (2) significance of response set			Binomial I Is it a reason?		Binomial II Is it a major reason?		
	n	χ^2	p	z	p	n	z	p
13a.	33	8.91	0.05	2.96	0.005	25	2.60	0.01
13b.	33	8.91	0.05	2.96	0.005	25	2.60	0.01
13c.	33	14.36	0.001	2.96	0.005	25	3.40	0.001
13d.	33	2.36	No	1.57	No	21	1.53	No
13e.	33	1.64	No	1.91	No	22	1.28	No
13f.	32	2.69	No	2.47	0.05	23	1.46	No
13g.	32	10.19	0.01	-1.06	No	13	×	×

*Refer to table 5 for the reasons.

“n” = number of respondents; “p” = maximum level of significance for which the preference holds. If the preference is not significant, “No” is entered. “×” = test not performed. “ χ^2 ” and “z” = the values the tests produce. The goodness-of-fit test has two degrees of freedom.

nificant preference for that being a reason and a significant preference for it being a major reason not to switch.

For the reason, “historical practice of classifying using DDC,” the goodness-of-fit and first binomial tests contradicted each other: the former gave a response of “not significant” and the latter, “significant.” Of the two tests, the binomial test is likely the better guide as it groups the answers in a clearer form, a simple yes or no. Although one can interpret this as meaning there is a significant preference for this being a reason not to switch, one can interpret the goodness-of-fit test as meaning libraries are not agreed on how important the reason is. This interpretation is supported by the results of the second binomial test, which showed no significant preference for it being a major or minor reason.

Neither one of the tests revealed any significant preference for “avoiding a split collection” or “reclassification no longer a priority” being reasons not to switch to LC. Finally, although the goodness-of-fit test points to “administration’s preference for DDC” as being a significant reason, the first binomial test indicates it is not. Again, the binomial test is probably the better guide. The second binomial test could not be validly performed since not enough libraries stated that the “administration’s preference for DDC” was a reason.

Several respondents commented when asked to give other reasons for staying with DDC. “Patrons are familiar with it,” “no change is needed,” “Dewey is infinitely expandable,” “patrons can browse it easily on their computers,” “our library’s clientele use Dewey in the teaching profession,” and “we just prefer Dewey” were given as more important reasons, while “Dewey is used in other local

libraries,” “Dewey is used internationally,” and “we recently had a reclassification project to Dewey” were given as less important reasons.

Question 14 considered whether DDC’s characteristics contribute to academic libraries’ continuing its use (see tables 7 and 8). The two characteristics that libraries liked most about DDC were “its hierarchical structure” and that it allows for “close and broad classification.” Of the two, the “hierarchical structure” was clearly preferred as a major reason: the goodness-of-fit test showed the pattern of responses was significant, the first binomial test showed a significant preference for “hierarchical structure” being a reason, and the second binomial test showed a significant preference for its being a major reason. The goodness-of-fit test showed the pattern of responses for “close and broad classification” was significant. The first binomial test showed there is a significant preference for “close and broad classification” being a reason, but the second test showed there was no agreement on its being a major reason.

The statistical tests for the other two DDC characteristics, “flexible in the selection of the classification number” and “accommodates new subjects,” reveal that although they were reasons, they were not major reasons. Both tests failed the goodness-of-fit test and the second binomial test, but passed the first binomial test. Again, the first binomial test is the better guide here: libraries agree either characteristic is a reason, but did not agree that either is a major reason.

Libraries were asked in question 15 if converting to LC was something they had ever considered (see table 9). Fifteen libraries never considered converting, while 14 libraries had. Four libraries responded with “don’t know.” Of the libraries

Table 7. DDC characteristics

	More important		Less important		Not a reason		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
14a. Hierarchical in structure	21	62	7	21	5	15	1	3
14b. Allows for close and broad classification	17	50	12	35	4	12	1	3
14c. Flexible in the selection of the classification number	15	44	12	35	5	15	2	6
14d. Accommodates new subjects	14	41	10	29	8	24	2	6

Table 8. Summary of statistical tests for DDC characteristics*

	χ^2 (2) significance of response set		p	Binomial I Is it a reason?		Binomial II Is it a major reason?		
	n	χ^2		z	p	n	z	p
14a.	33	13.82	0.001	4.00	0.001	28	2.65	0.01
14b.	33	7.82	0.05	4.35	0.001	29	0.93	No
14c.	32	4.94	No	3.89	0.001	27	0.58	No
14d.	32	1.75	No	2.83	0.005	24	0.82	No

*Refer to table 7 for the characteristics.

“n” = number of respondents; “p” = maximum level of significance for which the preference holds. If the preference is not significant, “No” is entered. “ χ^2 ” and “z” = the values the tests produce. The goodness-of-fit test has two degrees of freedom.

that had considered converting, 3 had done so within the last three years. Interestingly, between 1980 and 2003, 10 of the libraries had considered converting after the trend to reclassify had reached its peak.

Question 16 asked about possible reasons that would lead libraries to change from DDC to LC (see tables 10 and 11). Only two statistical tests could be performed with this set of questions. The second binomial test could not be performed as no question had at least 20 libraries reporting any of the statements to be a reason. Only two reasons passed either statistical test: "library expansion" and "administration wants to convert." The other five failed both tests. This failure is very likely because the questions asked were hypothetical. A survey of libraries that recently switched to LC

or are in the process of switching might have given clearer, more statistically significant answers, since the question to them would not have been hypothetical.

The reason "administration wants to convert" is ambiguous. It passed the goodness-of-fit test, but failed the binomial test. If this question were interpreted consistently with the other questions, where the first binomial test and the goodness-of-fit test contradicted, one could conclude that it would not be a significant reason to convert. The fact that the question passed the goodness-of-fit test is likely to be an artifact of the test and the question's having three choices instead of two.

"Library expansion" passed both tests. In fact, the preference on the goodness-of-fit test (31.82) was the most significant preference received for any question. The binomial test revealed that there was a significant preference *not* to convert because of "library expansion." This finding is the only clear fact that can be shown from the section.

Five libraries gave other major reasons to convert: joining or pressure to join a consortium in which most of the members use LC, a change in administration, a desire to make the library similar to other academic libraries, and a change in focus in that library from being a community college to being a feeder college to the local university.

Table 9. When libraries considered converting to LC

Years	No. of Libraries
2000–2003	3
1990–1999	4
1980–1989	3
1970–1979	1
1960–1969	1
Don't know	4
Never	15

Table 10. Reasons libraries would switch to LC

	More important		Less important		Not a reason		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
16a. Faster cataloging	10	29	8	24	15	44	1	3
16b. Library expansion	1	3	6	18	26	76	1	3
16c. Improved technology for easier reclassification	6	18	10	29	17	50	1	3
16d. Budget increases	10	29	5	15	17	50	2	6
16e. Dewey limitations	5	15	12	35	15	44	2	6
16f. Admin. wants to convert	12	35	2	6	18	53	2	6
16g. Patrons' requests	5	15	10	29	17	50	2	6

Table 11. Summary of statistical tests for reasons why libraries would switch to LC*

	χ^2 (2) significance of response set			Binomial I Is it a reason?		Binomial II Is it a major reason?		
	n	χ^2	p	z	p	n	z	p
16a.	33	2.36	No	0.52	No	18	×	×
16b.	33	31.82	0.001	-3.31	0.001	7	×	×
16c.	33	5.64	No	-0.17	No	16	×	×
16d.	32	6.81	No	-0.35	No	15	×	×
16e.	32	4.94	No	0.35	No	17	×	×
16f.	32	12.25	0.005	-0.71	No	14	×	×
16g.	32	6.81	No	-0.35	No	15	×	×

*Refer to Table 10 for the reasons.

"n" = number of respondents; "p" = maximum level of significance for which the preference holds. If the preference is not significant, "No" is entered. "×" = test not performed. The goodness-of-fit test has two degrees of freedom.

Question 17 addressed what materials would be considered for reclassification if DDC libraries could convert. Thirteen libraries indicated that all materials in their collection would be converted, as opposed to only 7 libraries that would reclassify circulating items alone. Libraries were then asked whether, if given the budget to reclassify their collections today, would they do so? A majority (23 libraries) stated they would not reclassify their collections even if they could afford it. Instead, these libraries would prefer to use their resources for collection development, which was the most common comment made. Only 9 libraries said they would reclassify given they had the resources. A binomial test reveals that there is a significant preference not to reclassify, $n = 32$, $z = -2.47$, $p < .05$.

Finally, the last section's questions focused on patrons' input on a library's classification scheme. Nineteen libraries indicated that their patrons have no preference for a classification system, while 14 indicated the patrons had a preference. Testing at the .05 level of significance, a binomial test reveals no significant result, $n = 33$, $z = -0.87$. The patrons' choice of classification was evenly divided. Seven libraries preferred DDC and 7 chose LC.

Libraries were also asked if the patron comments they received about their classification systems were positive, negative, or both. Four libraries' patrons had positive comments, 1 library's patrons had negative comments, and the other 7 were mixed. The survey did not ask what those comments were.

Question 21 considered which classification scheme, LC or DDC, their patrons were more familiar with. Five libraries reported that their patrons were more familiar with DDC. In 3 libraries, patrons were more familiar with LC, and in 6 libraries were familiar with both. Two libraries said their students were more familiar with DDC, while their faculty was more familiar with LC. Eight libraries claimed their patrons were more familiar with LC, while in only 5 libraries with DDC. Six libraries said their patrons were familiar with both.

The survey found more faculty (12 libraries) and librarians (8 libraries) than students (7 libraries) commented on their library's classification when asked in question 22. The finding that the faculty is more familiar than the students with LC is not surprising considering that the faculty probably have used LC in other academic libraries.

Question 23 addressed whether a library would consider the patrons' preference for a reclassification project. The findings were inconclusive because there were not enough responses.

The final survey question asked about the library's response when patrons inquire why their library continues to use DDC. Several libraries responded by saying that continuing with DDC was by choice because it met the needs of the library, with such reasons as "Dewey is sufficient for the size and type of our collection," "It's best suited for our patrons," "Its organization suits the sciences," and "We educate K-12 teachers and library media specialists at our institution and feel that they will be better prepared to serve in K-12 if they use Dewey through out their higher education experience." Another reason given by some of the libraries was patron familiarity.

For other libraries, the reasons given did not explain why they chose to use DDC, but rather why they were not converting to LC. These reasons included a lack of staffing, funding, and room to reclassify. One library also stated, "We cannot afford to have a split collection for a long period of time." Several libraries said that patrons never ask why they continue to use DDC, while one other said, "We do not have an official response."

Table 12. Relationship between size of library and various factors

Correlations with size of library and their:	r	n
Classifying of all materials in Dewey	-0.19	34
Accepting call number found on copy	0.06	33
Shortening call numbers	0.17	34
Using another edition to classify some topics	-0.06	34
Using optional numbers	0.02	31
Using specialized schedules	0.02	31
Having thought of switching to LC	-0.12	29
Spending money on reclassification	-0.14	32
Patrons expressing a classification preference	0.19	33
Patrons influencing classification scheme	0.08	16
Not converting due to lack of staff	0.15	33
Not converting due to lack of resources	0.15	33
Not converting due to reclassification cost	0.15	33
Not converting due to historical practice	-0.29	32
Not converting due to disliking split collections	0.14	33
Not converting due to not being a priority	-0.16	33
Not converting due to administration's preference	-0.17	32
Preferring Dewey's hierarchical structure	0.10	33
Preferring Dewey's close and broad classification	0.10	33
Preferring Dewey's flexibility	-0.35	32
Preferring Dewey's accommodation of new subjects	-0.25	32
Converting due to library expansion	-0.03	33
Converting due to administration's desire	0.20	32
Converting to get work done faster	0.16	33
Converting due to better technology	-0.10	33
Converting due to bigger budget	-0.10	33
Converting due to limitations of Dewey	-0.25	32
Converting due to patrons' requests	0.28	32

"n" = number of respondents. "r" = Pearson coefficient (degree of linear relationship between the two variables). $p < .05$, two tails. For all the above questions, the survey data was able to be collapsed into two choices (yes/no; a reason/not a reason; X was done/was not done). No test showed a significant relationship.

A final run of statistical tests was done with the point-biserial correlation test comparing the size of the libraries to all variables, which were, or could be reduced to, dichotomous variables. The size of the libraries was not significantly related to any variable (see table 12). This may have been because most of the libraries were small.

Conclusion

At a time when new technology and the Internet influence library trends, this study shows that a past library trend by DDC academic libraries to convert to LC has not completely run its course. From the small sample of 34 libraries responding, 10 considered reclassifying between 1980 and 2003. Of those 10 libraries, 3 had considered changing within the last three years. However, DDC academic libraries are not likely to revive the trend and switch to LC. This is primarily for two reasons: a lack of resources either financial or human, and the high cost of reclassification. For the majority of these libraries, even if they had the budget to reclassify they would not, instead preferring to use their resources for collection development.

Overall, libraries continue with DDC because they are satisfied with using it as their classification scheme. For a majority of the libraries, DDC is used as the primary scheme for monographs, serials, and nonprint and government documents materials, while only a few libraries use different schemes for some materials. Using the latest DDC edition is important to these libraries so they can stay current with schedule revisions. Staying up to date allows them the choice of reclassifying materials (if necessary) so that materials on the same subject stay together on the shelves. Another benefit is that DDC is not as difficult for paraprofessionals to learn as LC is. Either a professional or a paraprofessional can use DDC to assign call numbers, which allows for a technical services department to effectively manage its human resources as needed. In addition, these libraries like DDC's hierarchical structure and its flexibility to either finely subdivide materials on closely related subjects by assigning lengthy call numbers or to instead group them together by assigning short call numbers, as a library may prefer. DDC is also familiar to these libraries' patrons, even being used in some faculty's lessons.

Unfortunately, no significant conclusions could be made regarding whether patrons show an interest in the library's choice to use DDC rather than LC. The probable reason is that patrons are unaware of different classification systems until they are confronted with split collections or have actually done research in an LC library. This is probably why more faculty and librarians have commented on their library's choice of classification scheme than students. Undergraduate students would especially be less forthcom-

ing in their comments because they are familiar with DDC from their school libraries and they do not usually have opportunities to use LC libraries. Whether or not they can locate a book on the shelf is probably more important to many patrons than the classification used.

The study also was unable to determine if patrons' preference for a classification scheme influenced a library's decision to reclassify. However, the fact that 19 libraries indicated that their patrons have not commented on a preference for a classification scheme is worth noting. The lack of interest shown by the library patrons probably explains why libraries have not normally concerned themselves when their patrons do comment or have a preference for a classification scheme. For those DDC academic libraries that do respond to their patrons raising the issue of why they remain a DDC library, an educational campaign or Web page touting the history and benefits of DDC might be helpful to the library and its patrons. These DDC libraries are unique for the very fact that they remain with DDC; because of this, a follow-up study would determine if new factors, including patrons, might influence the decision to reclassify.

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Appendix Dewey Decimal Survey

1. What is the total number of titles in your library's collections? _____
2. How many titles are cataloged per year in your library/system? _____
3. Who assigns Dewey call numbers in your catalog department?:
 _____ Paraprofessionals. How many? _____
 _____ Catalogers. How many? _____
4. Does your library use Dewey classification for all types of material?
 _____ Yes. Please go to question 6.
 _____ No. Please answer the next question.
5. Please estimate the percentage of titles which your library classifies per year by type and classification system:
 Books : Dewey _____ LC _____ SUDOCS _____ Accession numbers _____
 Other (please specify) _____
 Serials: Dewey _____ LC _____ SUDOCS _____ Accession numbers _____
 Other (please specify) _____
 Gov. Docs. : Dewey _____ LC _____ SUDOCS _____ Accession numbers _____
 Other (please specify) _____
 Nonprint: Dewey _____ LC _____ SUDOCS _____ Accession numbers _____
 Other (please specify) _____
 Other (please specify) _____ : Dewey _____ LC _____ SUDOCS _____ Accession numbers _____ Other (please specify)
6. Do you accept Dewey call numbers when found on catalog copy?
 _____ Yes _____ No
7. Do you shorten a Dewey call number to a certain number of digits beyond the decimal?
 _____ Yes. How many digits? _____
 _____ No
8. Do you use the current edition of Dewey?
 _____ Yes, current full (DDC 21).
 _____ Yes, current abridged (Abridged 13)
 _____ No. Please specify edition _____
9. Do you use a different edition to classify some topics? _____ Yes _____ No
 If yes, please specify topics and editions used:
 Topic _____ Edition _____
 Topic _____ Edition _____
10. Do you use optional numbers (i.e., numbers in parentheses) for some topics?
 _____ Yes _____ No If yes, specify numbers: _____
11. Do you use specialized schedules to classify certain subjects? _____ Yes _____ No
 If yes, which schedules? _____
12. What other local classification practices do you use? _____
13. Please indicate the importance to your library of each reason below for continuing with Dewey:
 - a. Lack of resources for a major shift of the collections.
 _____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all
 - b. Prohibitive cost of doing reclassification project.
 _____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all
 - c. Lack of staff to handle reclassification.
 _____ More important. _____ Less important. _____ Not a reason at all.

d. Wish to avoid a split collection.

_____ More important. _____ Less important. _____ Not a reason at all.

e. Changing classification is no longer considered a priority.

_____ More important. _____ Less important. _____ Not a reason at all.

f. Historical practice of using Dewey.

_____ More important. _____ Less important. _____ Not a reason at all.

g. Other (Please state reasons): _____

_____ More important. _____ Less important. _____ Not a reason at all.

h. Administration wants to remain with Dewey.

_____ More important. _____ Less important. _____ Not a reason at all.

14. Please indicate below the importance of the characteristic(s) about Dewey classification that your library considers in continuing to use Dewey:

a. Is hierarchical in structure, allowing for the development from the general to the specific in a logical order.

___ More important ___ Less important ___ Not a reason at all

b. Allows for close and broad classification.

___ More important ___ Less important ___ Not a reason at all

c. Is flexible in the selection of the classification number depending on what aspect of the subject is covered in a work since there is no one class for any given subject.

___ More important ___ Less important ___ Not a reason at all

d. Accommodates new subjects since it is based on a systematic outline of knowledge rather than literary warrant.

___ More important ___ Less important ___ Not a reason at all

e. Other (Please state reasons): _____

___ More important ___ Less important ___ Not a reason at all

15. Did your library considered converting to the LC classification?

_____ Yes. Please indicate the time period when the discussions took place:

_____ 2000–2003

_____ 1995–1999

_____ 1990–1994

_____ 1980–1989

_____ 1970–1979

_____ 1960–1969

_____ No

_____ Don't know

16. Please indicate below the possible reasons your library might consider converting to LC in the future, and their relative importance.

a. Faster cataloging, with LC call numbers included on most OCLC records.

_____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all

b. Library expansion, with more stack space for separate shelving areas.

_____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all

c. Easier reclassification done with online catalogs / integrated systems.

_____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all

d. Budget increases, making large projects workable.

_____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all

e. Dewey classification changes and limitations.

_____ More important. _____ Less important. _____ Not a reason at all.

f. Administration wants to convert.

_____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all

g. Patron requests/complaints.

_____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all

h. Other (specify reason(s)): _____

_____ More important _____ Less important _____ Not a reason at all

17. What materials would your library reclass?

- Newer material only
 Newer material & all reference materials
 All of the collections
 Other (Please specify): _____

18. If your library could afford to reclassify its collections today, would you use those resources to reclassify?

- Yes
 No. If not, how would you use the resources? _____

19. Have your patrons communicated their preference for a classification system?

- Yes. What was their preference? LC Dewey
 No. Please go to question 24.

20. Please check all that describe your patrons' comments about your library's classification :

- Positive Negative Mixed Don't know

21. Based on patrons' comments or surveys, which of the following are they more familiar with?: Dewey LC Both
 Don't know

22. Which of the following groups of patrons make comments on your library's classification? Please check all that apply:

- Faculty Staff Librarians Students Administration

Please give examples of the comments you have received: _____

23. If you were thinking of changing to LC, would your library use patron input as a factor in making the decision ? Yes No

24. Please indicate below your library's response to patrons when asked why you continue to use Dewey: _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions. If you would like to receive the collated results of this survey by e-mail, please give your preferred e-mail address here: _____