About this workshop

Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) is a method of organizing information collections using notations that reflect the subject of each work and its relationship with other works in the collection. It has been translated into over 30 different languages, and continues to be used by libraries around the world. This workshop introduces participants to the purpose, basic structure, and principles of Dewey Decimal Classification. In the second half of the workshop, participants will apply the principles they have learned by classifying actual topics using the online utility WebDewey.

Purpose of this workshop

- Review the principles and rules of DDC.
- Review the organization of the scheme, including the tables, schedules, and relative index.
- Discover the benefits and limitations of DDC through practical exercises.

What is DDC?

- A method of organizing knowledge by discipline, then by subject.
- An extensible system that uses decimals to accommodate continual additions and deletions.
- A universal system: its notations are based on Arabic numerals.
- An analytico-synthetic classification system: topics are arranged within a hierarchical structure (= analytic), but rules allow for different aspects of a topic to be combined together into one notation (= synthetic). A synthetic system is in contrast to the Library of Congress Classification system, which is primarily enumerative (i.e., topics are pre-assigned a number).

DDC is built around the concept of collocation by discipline and, to some degree, by subject. Collocation means bringing together similar works, thereby showing the relationship between like and unlike works.

When using DDC to organize library collections that contain multiple works on the same topic, DDC notations must be used in conjunction with a shelf numbering system, such as Cutter notations. The Cutter, an alpha-numeric notation, is added to the end of the Dewey number in order to transform the Dewey number into a unique call number for each unique work in the library collection.

Background

- DDC was conceived by Melvil Dewey in 1873. The first edition was published in 1876.
- The Dewey Section at the Library of Congress updates the system. OCLC holds the copyright.
- DDC is translated into over 30 languages.
• It is the “most widely used classification system in the world”, including libraries and web applications in over 135 countries (DDC23, vol. 1, p. xliii-xliv).

For this workshop, we will use the full 23rd edition of DDC (DDC23), rather than the abridged edition. To access DDC23, we will log into WebDewey, an OCLC online product.

To access DDC: http://dewey.org/webdewey. Login/password will be provided in the workshop.

Differences between the full vs. abridged editions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full DDC23</th>
<th>DDC Abridged 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 4 volumes</td>
<td>• 1 volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• True abridgement of DDC23 = same principles and rules as the DDC23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fewer opportunities for number building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Less depth of coverage per topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differences between the print vs. online formats:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print</th>
<th>WebDewey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Published in 2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Tables occupy one volume</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Relative Index occupies one volume</td>
<td>• Updated regularly (i.e., more up-to-date than the print)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can search or browse by DDC numbers, LCSH, keywords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can add local notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number-building tool included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parts of the DDC

• **Introduction.** Provides instruction on the structure and rules of DDC. Read this if you want to learn DDC well. [http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/dewey/versions/print/intro.pdf](http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/dewey/versions/print/intro.pdf)

• **Glossary.** Defines selected terms used in the introduction, schedules, tables and manual. [http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/dewey/versions/print/glossary.pdf](http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/dewey/versions/print/glossary.pdf)

• **Manual.** Provides advice on choosing between similar or related numbers. [http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/dewey/webdewey/help/manual.pdf](http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/dewey/webdewey/help/manual.pdf)

• **Tables.** Lists the subdivisions that can be added to base numbers. [http://dewey.org/webdewey/tables.html](http://dewey.org/webdewey/tables.html)

• **Summaries.** Provide a “higher level” overview of the schedules. In the print version, the summaries appear as a distinct section, but in WebDewey, the information is integrated into the platform.

• **Schedules.** Main body of DDC.

• **Relative Index.** An alphabetical listing of topics, with corresponding DDC numbers. Never use the relative index alone. In the print version, the relative index occupies the entirety of the 4th volume. In WebDewey, the usefulness of the relative index is largely replaced by the search and browse feature.
Structure of DDC

DDC is a "general knowledge organization tool" (OCLC, 2011, p. 1). It divides knowledge into ten main classes, using notations that consist solely of Arabic numerals. Each notation is at least 3 digits long:

- 000 Computer science, information & general works
- 100 Philosophy & psychology
- 200 Religion
- 300 Social sciences (Culture, political science, economics, law, education, commerce, customs & folklore)
- 400 Language
- 500 Science
- 600 Technology (Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture, Management)
- 700 Arts & recreation
- 800 Literature
- 900 History & geography

- The first digit of each 3-digit notation represents one of the above 10 main classes.
- Each class is further divided into the hundred divisions, represented by the second digit.
- Each division is further divided into the thousand sections, represented by the third digit.
- Each section may be further subdivided, depending on instructions found in the schedules.
- A brief description of each main class is provided in the DDC’s introduction. You will also find a description of each class within the DDC schedule, at the start of each class.
- The DDC schedules set out the system of numbers available for use, along with instructions pertaining to specific numbers and number building.

How to classify with DDC

Determine the subject of a work

DDC provides advice on this step (vol. 1, p. xlvii-xlviii):

- Consider the title of the work, but do not determine the subject solely from the title.
- Consider its table of contents, chapter headings, and chapter subheadings.
- Review its preface, introduction, foreword, book jacket, accompanying material, and summary.
- Scan the text of the work.
- Consider its bibliographical references and index.
- Refer to the catalogue record of centralized cataloguing services.
- Consult outside sources, such as reviews, reference works, and subject experts.

Determine the notation based on the discipline of the work

- Select the appropriate discipline after determining the subject of the work.
- Class works according to the discipline for which it was intended. Do not class works based on the discipline it came from.
- Use the relative index to point your way to topics with which you are unfamiliar, but do not rely on the relative index alone, as it does not reveal relationships between similar numbers or illustrate a number’s placement within its structural and notational hierarchy.
- Follow all instructions in the schedule and relevant tables.
- Follow the rules of classification set out by DDC.
Exercise: Quick warm-up

Vaccine development: 615.372

World travel guides: 910.202

Incunabula (books published in Europe before 1501): 093 (or 011.42 if it is a bibliography of incunabula)

Concepts of the DDC system

Structural hierarchy

Instructions and notes pertaining to a particular number is said to have hierarchical force over subordinate numbers located directly beneath it in the hierarchy (DDC23, vol. 1, p. xlvi). In other words, instructions and notes that apply to one class apply to all subdivisions of that class.

Notational hierarchy

In terms of specificity, any given number is:

- **Subordinate** to a number that is one digit shorter. E.g., 636.71 for Breeds of dogs is subordinate to 636.7 for Dogs.
- **Coordinate** with a class whose notation has the same number of significant digits. E.g., 636.75 Nonsporting dogs is coordinate with 636.73 Working and herding dogs.
- **Superordinate** to a number that is one digit longer. E.g., 636.75 Sporting dogs, hounds, terriers is superordinate to 636.753 Hounds.
- Notational hierarchy may sometimes be violated by special headings, notes and entries.

Length of numbers and placement of decimal point

- All numbers must be at least 3 digits long.
- It is possible for a number to begin with 0 or 00.
- No periods are inserted for 3-digit numbers.
- For numbers more than 3 digits in length, a period is inserted between the 3rd and 4th digits, after you have finished building your number.

Number building

- Different aspects or “facets” of a topic may be added to a number in the schedule, forming a new notation. Some interpretation is therefore required on the part of the classifier.
- Primarily occurs through the application of Tables. **Note:** Unless otherwise instructed, *never number-build by adding two or more numbers from the schedule together.*

Tables

T2. Geographic Areas, Historical Periods, Biography.
T3. Subdivisions for the Arts, for Individual Literatures, for Specific Literary Forms.
T3A. Subdivisions for Works by or about Individual Authors.
T3B. Subdivisions for Works by or about More than One Author.
T3C. Notation to Be Added Where Instructed in Table 3B, 700.4, 791.4, 808-809.
T4. Subdivisions of Individual Languages and Language Families.
T5. Ethnic and National Groups.
T6. Languages.

Tables 1 and 2 are the most commonly used.

**Table 1: Standard subdivisions**

- Each standard subdivision represents a recurring physical form or approach towards a subject.
- Apply it “only when the work in hand covers the whole, or approximately the whole subject of the number” (vol. 1, p. 179). In other words, **do not add a standard subdivision if it expresses only part of the topic covered by the number**.
- Each standard subdivision, with the exception of −04 for “Special topics”, can be added to a number in the schedule **unless** specific instructions state otherwise (vol. 1, p. 179).
- Standard subdivisions are not always listed in the schedules. They may be listed in the schedules when they are needed to fill out the 3-digit number.
- You can add a standard subdivision to a number if the schedule does not list it. Refrain from adding a standard subdivision if instructions in the schedules or tables indicate that a standard subdivision cannot be added.
- "Zero" rule: Always check the schedule for the correct placement of zeroes.
- Never add more than one standard subdivision to a number except when specifically instructed to do so (vol. 1, p. 179).
- If more than one standard subdivision applies, choose the standard subdivision based on the Table of preference listed at the start of Table 1 (vol. 1, p. 180). [In WebDewey, see http://dewey.org/webdewey/index_11.html?recordId=ddc%3aT1--0]
- Never add a standard subdivision if it provides the same meaning as the base number.

| --01 | Philosophy and theory |
| --02 | Miscellany |
| --03 | Dictionaries, encyclopedias, concordances |
| --04 | Special topics |
| --05 | Serial publications |
| --06 | Organizations and management |
| --07 | Education, research, related topics |
| --08 | Groups of people |
| --09 | History, geographic treatment, biography |

**Exercise: Number building with Table 1**

Find the base number for the topic “the book”:

002

Now apply the appropriate standard subdivision to the base number in order to form the most complete notation for each topic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Standard subdivision</th>
<th>Final notation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book collecting</td>
<td>——075</td>
<td>002.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book history</td>
<td>——09</td>
<td>002.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A dictionary of book-related terminology</td>
<td>——03</td>
<td>002.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 to Table 6 notations**

- Can only be added when specific instructions in the schedules and tables are provided.
- You may also be instructed to add notations to a number from another part of the schedules, or from “add tables” in the schedules.

**Exercise: Number building with Table 1 & Table 2**

**Build the number for “Canadian folklore”:**

Base number: 398

Notation from Table 1: ——09 (tip: look for the standard subdivision for geographic treatment)

Notation from Table 2: ——071 (from T2—03-T2—09)

Now record all the numbers in sequence: 398.0971

**Other types of instructions**

**Discontinued numbers**
Marked in square brackets [   ]. Do not use them.

**Optional numbers**
Marked in parentheses (   ). Use them only if your local institution, as a policy, uses optional numbers.

**Tables of preference**
These are set out at the beginning of Table 1, as well as at the beginning of applicable ranges of classes, divisions, and sections of the schedule.
Footnotes
These are used for instructions that apply to multiple subdivisions/sections or to a topic within a class. Footnotes are marked with *.

Center Notes
Numbers, headings, and notes that appear at the centre of the page indicate the relationship between and across numbers. They may also indicate a departure from the notational hierarchy. All centered entries are marked with the symbol >.

Notes
Notes of various types provide instructions on number selection and building:

- **Add** – Indicates how a number is to be constructed for a particular topic, using provisions in the schedules and/or tables.
- **Build** – Indicates how a number can be constructed using provisions in the schedules and/or tables.
- **Class-elsewhere** – Indicates preference order or indicate other numbers for which a concept may also be found.
- **Class-here** – Lists major topics, which may be broader or narrower than a heading, or may overlap a heading.
- **Comprehensive works** – Any works that deal with a subject from multiple points of view within a single discipline.
- **Definition** – Indicates meaning of the term used by DDC.
- **Discontinued** – Indicates that part or all of a number is no longer used. Discontinued numbers will be marked with square brackets.
- **Do-not-use** – Indicates when a standard subdivision or table provision cannot be used to express a particular topic.
- **Former-heading** – Use of heading has been altered from the previous edition of Dewey.
- **Including** – Identifies "standing room" numbers. Standard subdivisions cannot be added for any topics listed in including notes (p. xxxiv).
- **Number-built** – Identifies and explains the source of built number.
- **Option** – Instructions for optional number selection or building. Use of optional notes is determined by the local cataloguing agency.
- **Preference** – Indicates which number is preferred over another possible number.
- **Relocation** – Indicates that part or all of a topic has been moved to a different number in the current edition.
- **Revision** – Indicates that the current edition contains a change in the subdivision.
- **Scope** – Indicates whether the meaning of the number is narrower or broader than suggested by the heading.
- **See-also reference** – Leads to related topics.
- **See-manual** – Points to the section of the manual that discusses the choice of number for a given topic.
- **See-references** – Leads from a concept in one notational hierarchy to another.
- **Standard-subdivisions are added** – Confirms that standard subdivisions may be added to the number.
Rules of DDC used for classifying multidisciplinary works

Rule of application
If a work deals with interrelated subjects in the same discipline, class the work with the subject that is being acted upon (vol. 1, p. xlviii).

Fuller treatment
If a work deals with two or more subjects in the same discipline, class the work with the subject receiving the fuller treatment (vol. 1, p. xlviii).

First-of-two rule
If two subjects receive equal treatment, class the work with the subject whose number comes first in the DDC schedules. Do the same for works treated equally by two disciplines (vol. 1, p. xlix).

Rule of three
If a work covers equally three or more subjects that are all subdivisions of a broader subject, class the work in the first higher number that includes all the subjects (vol. 1, p. xlix).

Rule of zero
"Avoid subdivisions beginning with zero if there is a choice between 0 and 1-9 at the same point in the hierarchy of the notation." Avoid subdivisions beginning with 00 when there is a choice between 00 and 0 (vol. 1, p. xlix).

Interdisciplinary numbers
If the work treats the subject from multiple disciplines, and an interdisciplinary number is provided in the schedules or Relative Index, use the interdisciplinary number if it is applicable (vol. 1, p. l).

Table of Last Resort
When there are multiple possibilities to class a work, and none of the above rules help resolve the choice of number, use the Table of Last Resort (vol. 1, p. l) to make the final decision. The table of last resort lists the preferences in order:

- Kinds of things
- Parts of things
- Materials from which things, kinds, or parts are made
- Properties of things, kinds, parts, or materials
- Processes within things, kinds, parts, or materials
- Operations upon things, kinds, parts, or materials
- Instrumentalities for performing such operations

Do not override the author's intention or emphasis when selecting your final number.

Exercise: Determine the notation

Determine the notation for each topic. For topics where more than one notation is possible, explain your choice of notation. For notations that you build, explain the instructions that you used.
Freedom of information

323.445 (if the discipline is Political Science) or 342.0853 (if the discipline is Law)

Semantic Web

025.0427 (second choice: 401.430285)

A museum collection of historical ball gowns

There is not a perfect answer here. Several possibilities:

- 391.0074 (391 + standard subdivision for museum collection. Two zeroes are kept in front of the standard subdivision to ensure there are no conflicts with notations in the schedule.)
- 391.2074 (391.2 + standard subdivision for museum collection)
- 687.16074 (687.16 + standard subdivision for museum collection)
- 746.074 (746 + + standard subdivision for museum collection)

Canadian literature in English

Start with 810-890. Read the Notes.

Use the “Create built number” button to kickstart the right table to add to the base number 810.
- T3B—091 to T3B—099 “Literature displaying specific features or emphasizing subjects, or for and by groups of people”.
- Add to base number T3B—09 notation T3C—1-T3C—9 from Table 3C. Click “Add”.
- This forces you to T3C (as per instructions back in T3B).
- T3C—9 “Literature for and by groups of people with specific attributes, resident of specific areas.”
- T3C—93-T3C—99 “Literature for and by residents of specific continents, countries, localities.”
- Add to base number T3C—9 notation T2—3-T2—9 from Table 2. Click “Add”.
- T2—71. Click “Add”.
- Final answer = 810.9971

### Additional exercises

Classify the topics below with DDC23. For multidisciplinary topics, identify the relevant rules of DDC that you used in order to assign the most appropriate DDC notation.

<p>| The religious traditions of Indigenous peoples of North America | 299.78 |
| Pedagogical approaches to information theory | 003.54071 |
| Using geographic information systems as a teaching tool | 526.0285 (can’t add another standard subdivision, as –0285 has already been |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Classification Number</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toronto municipal election</td>
<td>324.900971354</td>
<td>(324.9 + T1—09 + T2—71354)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography of Joseph Brant (1742-1807)</td>
<td>910.285</td>
<td>(same reason as above, --0285 is already a standard subdivision, so cannot add a second)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### References


**Further reading**