CatChat

A new "column" for discussion of cataloguers' dilemmas

From: Wendy Davis, Adelaide Theological Library
Subject: Dewey Dilemmas

One of the things I really enjoy about our new set up at the Adelaide Theological Library, is that Val and I have been able to have some 'deep, philosophical discussions' on DDC21. Several people at the conference suggested that we should share some of our conclusions with the forum, so here goes.

1.Saint Augustine.
We decided that works by and about Augustine fall into 3 categories
(a) Theological 230.14 A923 (works by) and 230.14 A924.? (critical works about)
(b) Historial 270.2 (including biographies not critical of his theology)
(c) Related to the order Augustines 255.4 (Rules etc) or 271.4 (history of the order or the order in history)

We also discovered 'City of God' and 'Confessions' in such places as 248.4 and 242. We decided that these works had been accepted more as theological works than devotional and as such preferred 230.14.

2. Thomas Aquinas--philosopher or theologian?
Our interest in Aquinas is from the theological point of view rather than the philosophical, so..(a) Theological works (including Summa Theologicae) 230.2 T454 and works critical of Aquinas' theology 230.2 T455.?

(b) Philosophical works by and about Aquinas as a medieval philosopher 189.4
(c) Historical e.g. biographies 270.5
These discussions are by no means the final word. What about Aquinas' ethics etc?

If you have any thoughts about these topics, feel free to contribute to the discussion.

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From: Philip Harvey, Joint Theological Library
Subject: Dewey Dilemmas a response

An essential classifying problem that faces every theological cataloguer is whether to arrange a major author's works by subject (i.e. anywhere in the collection) or under an agreed author number. This is not a problem for Pettee people in so far as Augustine and Thos. Aquinas are concerned, as the system allocates individual author numbers for all the Church Fathers and Mothers. Original works, biography, concordances and criticism can all be shelved at the one place.

If you use Dewey and classify purely by subject then anything by or about Augustine and Thos. Aquinas will inevitably be all over the shop, which is okay if you have a catalogue that can trace everything. If, however, you invent an author number system under Dewey certain difficulties can arise. The first is that if you invent more than one author number and arrange by main subject (as Wendy outlines for Augustine) then you will still have three or more places where Augustine can be located. This can be as confusing as having everything classified by subject. The second difficulty is that you must stick religiously to those numbers, so that a book about Augustine and chastity may not fall into any of the preordained categories. For this reason, a single main author number may well be preferable. The third difficulty is

the one that Dewey users always come up against: you have invented a number system for Augustine and Thos. Aquinas that is valid for your library but not necessarily for any other. There is simply no way all libraries can follow these recommended numbers for individual authors and their works. It is enough that the numbers serve well as an inhouse system.

A further challenge to the classifier is to ask, How far can these author numbers go? Who qualifies? Does the production of more than ten works serve as an indicator? Or the fact that they lived before 1000C.E or (LC's unhelpful favourite) 1800? Some fairly strict rules need to be adopted to discern who should have an author number.

The collected works of the Church Fathers and Mothers make for problems in Dewey because Dewey has never addressed the central issues. Solutions vary from library to library, each solution usually being something unique to that place. The most important thing to remember is, once you have set up a solution, keep to it!

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From: Wendy Davis, Adelaide Theological Library
Subject: Re:Dewey Dilemmas

Heed ye the words of wisdom from our VP! (who, of course, is right)! A word in our defense - ATL is in the unusual situation of putting four libraries together.

It is not unusual for us to find four (or more) copies of a title in several different places in the collection. The point then arises : which of these 3 or 4 places (if indeed, any of them) is the best place *for our library?*

The way we often tackle our retrospective cataloguing/classification problem is by taking a section (eg everything in the 280's on Augustine) and trying to come up with a solution on where is best for a multitude of things. Rest assured, each book is dealt with on an individual basis and we do not just pick up all the books on Augustine and plonk them in an 'author' number!

Philip is right about books ending up in a variety of places, but what we are trying to do, is be consistent about *why* things should go in 189.4 or 230.2 or 270.5 so that next time we do find something on Augustine, we have some idea as the reasoning behind the inevitable number of choices. (Dear Dewey! - well do we know Dewey's problems and Pettee's virtues!)

From :   Susan Phillips, Canberra College of Theology
Subject :   Dewey and Denominational stuff!

For all those learned cataloguers out there : in the dewey system, how do you catalogue works belonging to a particular denomination; for example, manuals, constitutions, directories, atlases, conferences, councils and synods, doctrines? The rule in 280 says place these in 280+, with added numbers for the particular area. However the preference is to treat the work by subject and add the denominational number at the end. Thus the works pertaining to the denomination are scattered throughout the library.

This problem is similar to the recent discussion between Wendy and Philip regarding such works by famous authors such as Bonhoeffer; creating a special number, or cataloguing by subject, thus dispersing the authors' works. It is gratifying to find that I am not the only one struggling over this issue. I liked the idea of creating numbers for them, however at present I have left these significant authors' works scattered in subject areas.
What do others do with their denominational works?

From : Wendy Davis

Subject : A response to Susan's query

It would depend on the size of your library, and more particularly, the size of the denominations you are talking about. For the larger denominations, putting all that sort of material in 280+ would defeat the purpose of having classification!

At ATL we generally scatter things by subject and add a 2 (Catholic) or 3 (Anglican) where necessary, eg at 262.14 (ordination). Constitutions go with the denomination, eg Uniting Church at 287.93; councils and synods at 262.5 eg Lambeth at 262.53, Vatican II at 262.52; doctrines at 230, eg Catholic 230.2, Anglican 230.3, Uniting Church 230.793.

We had quite lengthy discussions with the cataloguers at Flinders to ensure they understood the necessity of denominational differentiation in certain places, because it is not necessary in their library! Dewey makes it difficult in many ways, because it gives so many alternatives! It comes back to what suits your library and your users. Happy classifying!

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From :   Hal Cain, Joint Theological Library

Subject :   My ways to get LC authorities

1. via Kinetica Web – select RLIN as database and check NAF (name authorities) or SAF (subject authorities). When you get your result you have to select USMARC display, or you can't see the heading itself! It incurs a Kinetica search charge, and you must be a member! This shows you the full record.

2. via DRA, the library automation company. Their site presents authority records in text display – very useful but lacking the coded data and numbers (including LC control number which is necessary to communicate with LC).

   http://lcauth.dra.com/db/lCAUTH/author.html – names (titles/series have been removed)
   http://lcauth.dra.com/db/LCAUTH/subject.html – subjects (as well as LCSH, it includes Name and Title headings which have been used as subject headings). Questions such as "how has this heading been tagged?" cannot be answered here (110 or 151, 150 or 130, and other such conundra)

   http://lcauth.dra.com/db/LCAUTH/title.html –Titles including series entered under a name will be found in the "name" segment. Data such as instructions for entering volume numbering will not appear.

3. LC itself via Z39.50 gateway (note that this service will probably cease at the end of 1999, as LC's new catalogue becomes fully operational).

   http://lcweb.loc.gov/Z39.50/gateway.html#lc
   Click on "Advanced search". In the drop-down database choice, you can search LCNA and LCSH either separately or combined. If you get an error message indicating there are too many hits, return at once to the search form and submit again – usually it will then be processed.

   This gives complete LC authority records direct from LC's own files. It remains to be seen what provision will be made for authority records in the new system.

The Editor invites your contributions to these or any other cataloguing discussions! Send via ANZTLA-forum or to my email address.