

# Progress in Microprint:

## Part II. The Microcard Code

THE FOLLOWING is the text of the proposed code for standardizing the cataloging and manufacture of microcards as adopted by the Microcard Committee at its first meeting. The text of the rules is as they were duly adopted by the committee; the explanatory notes commenting on the text are not official, but, being compiled by the chairman of the committee and generally reflecting the committee's discussions, they may help in understanding the meaning and purpose of the rules.

The committee would appreciate comments on these rules as so far adopted. It does not consider any rule definitive until it has had the advantage of profession-wide study and discussion.

I. All microcards for library use shall be of the standard international card size, 75 by 125mm.

*Comment:* By definition "microcards" are catalog cards plus the text cataloged. Catalog cards may, of course, be of any size desired; but nearly a century ago the compelling advantage of having them uniform in size, and so interfilable, was realized; and in 1877 the so-called "standard size" catalog card was officially recommended. This 75 by 125mm. size has been in steadily increasing use ever since, until now it is standard in practically every research library in the world that uses catalog cards at all. It is to the last degree unlikely that the library world would consent to change to any other catalog card size.

But precedent is not the only reason for accepting for microcards our present international catalog card size. This size actually best fits microcard requirements. If, as Mr. Metcalf fears, our microcard libraries, a century hence, will have to be considered in terms of square miles, we should adopt for our microcard standard just as small a card as possible, for every fraction of unnecessary

space will involve tremendous future waste.\*

Fortunately, the back, or "micro," side of our standard size catalog card "matches up" very closely with the average length of all research materials. On this point Mr. Rider, in *The Scholar and the Future of the Research Library*, says:

If research materials can be said to have a common denominator, it is the fact that, on the whole, *they come in small packages*—in periodical articles, pamphlets, government documents, committee reports, society proceedings, and the like. As has been already pointed out, it is the secondary material, the re-serving up of primary fact for the general reader, that usually blossoms out into full-length book form.

It is largely because research material comes in small packages and is, as a result, minutely specialized, that it tends to be hard to get at. But the very reasons that have tended to bury it, bibliographically speaking, are exactly the reasons that make it fit so admirably into the microcard setup. The area of a single catalog card is after all, a limited one. Although, under compression, it will take longer items, it is best suited to items not over, perhaps, a hundred pages long. But for research material this length is almost ideal. Probably 95 per cent of all its separable "units"—all of its many millions of books, proceedings, run to less than one hundred pages. Probably the average size of a unit of research material would not be over sixty or seventy pages. In other words, microcards on the one hand and research materials on the other, seem naturally to "match up." And, when we do come upon the occasional research item that runs to over two hundred pages, we can either arbitrarily split it up for separate microcard analysis, if it appears to split along well definable subject lines, or we can, as has already been suggested, take recourse to a continuing series of two or more microcards.

But microcards have two sides. We must try to have a card that "matches up" for the cataloging front side as well as for the micro back. But here again we are fortunate, for our catalog card headings, entry, and abstract, on the average, just about fill full the catalog side of the card.

II. On all microcards for library use the micro-text — and nothing else — shall be placed on the backs of the cards, leaving the catalog entry, the abstract, the subject headings, the imprint, etc., to be placed on their fronts.

*Comment:* No reason has been advanced for not doing what this rule codifies, and there is one important reason for it. The two sides of the microcard will in many cases — perhaps in most cases — be manufactured by two different printing processes. To mix the two processes (on either side of the card) would double manufacturing costs (for that side).

III. All microcards for library use shall be made of white stock, of 100 per cent rag, or equivalent, quality, 1/100th of an inch thick.

*Comment:* All of these are existing library catalog card standards, the result of years of test, and in present general acceptance.

IV. Every microcard shall be punched with a round hole for drawer filing. This hole shall be 8mm. in diameter, shall be centered on the card horizontally, and shall be 5mm. from the bottom edge of the card.

*Comment:* This is the present international library catalog card standard.

(Rules V-XV, not yet taken up by the Microcard Committee, cover the question of division of subject fields between libraries using microcards.)

XVI. The language used by the Microcard Committee in its own functioning and its official publications and communications, shall be English.

*Comment:* Probably over half of all the world's purchases of microcards will originate in English-speaking countries, while English is the language most generally known in most of the microcard-buying countries.

XVII. The language used upon the microcards themselves—that is, upon microcards for library use—shall follow these rules:

a. The micro-text on the backs of all cards will, of course, always be entirely in the language of original publication, whatever it may be

b. The classification symbols will, of course, be automatically international in their form for all countries which use Arabic numerals and the Roman alphabet

c. The classification explanatory line shall, on cards for materials in the English language, be in English only; on cards for material in other languages it may, at the option of the issuing library, be either in English only or bilingual. If bilingual it shall be given in two lines, the upper line in the language of issuance (if the language be one in non-Roman type, transliterated or not, at the option of the issuing library); the lower line in an English translation of the upper line

d. The author's name shall be given in accordance with the cataloging practice of the Library of Congress and in Roman type

e. The language used in the main cataloging entry (*i.e.*, the transcript of the title page) shall follow L.C. practice. (This will mean, in most cases, that it will be in the language of issuance.)

f. On cards for material in other than the English language the abstract may, at the option of the issuing library, be bilingual, first in the language of issuance (transliterated or not at the option of the issuing library), and below a translation in English; or it may be in English only. On English-material cards it will, of course, be in English only.

XVIII. The cataloging practice of the Library of Congress shall be adopted as microcard cataloging practice, with the following exceptions and modifications.

a. Where, in an imprint, more than one place and/or publisher are given, the first one only is to be cited, followed by "etc." in brackets

b. The repetition of the author's name in the title page transcript is to be omitted where it is identical, or substantially identical, with the author heading, but it is to be retained in the case of joint authors, or where grammatical construction requires it, etc.

c. All notes typographically descriptive of the item cataloged are to be omitted, such as "reproduced from typewritten copy," "mimeographed," "lithoprinted," etc.

*Comment:* Since the microcard text clearly shows these facts.

d. All "contents" notes are to be omitted except as the abstract itself may be in contents form

e. All notes regarding an item's previous history are to be omitted, except as these may be given in the abstract

f. Such descriptive notes as "illustrated title page," "title enclosed in ornamental border," "limited edition in twenty numbered copies," are to be omitted

*Comment:* Because all these facts are shown automatically in the microcard text.

g. In the case of very long titles all matter not directly pertinent is to be omitted. (The entire title page transcript should be kept within a four-line limit.)

*Comment:* But sometimes parts of a long and genuinely descriptive title page may be used as an abstract.

h. In the author entry death dates are to be omitted

*Comment:* Some catalogers have objected to this rule. It avoids having cards become incorrect when living authors die.

i. In the case of books with more than one title page only the main title page is to be quoted (or the first if they seem to be of equal importance)

*Comment:* The other title pages are shown in the micro-text.

j. In the case of a work in two or more volumes not analyzed in microcarding but treated as a catalogable whole, and at the same time so bulky as to require, for each volume, multiple microcards, each volume is to be cataloged separately for microcarding (*i.e.*, "v.1," "v.2," etc., is to be clearly indicated).

XIX. The printing format of the catalog face of all microcards shall be in accordance with the following rules:

a. All type matter is to be set approximately 117mm. (28 picas) wide. The top margin is to be the same as the side margins

b. The subject heading classification symbols are to be set in either ten- (or eleven- or twelve-) point bold face, each one flush with its respective outside margin. The classification translation phrase is to be set in six-point (or eight-point) italic lower case. The subject heading subclassification word, if there is one, is also to be set in ten- (or eleven- or twelve-) point bold face and is to be followed by the classification translation phrase. If there is no subclassification word, then the classification translation phrase is to be centered between the classification symbols (as near as possible) and on a line with them

c. The author entry is to be set in either ten- (or eleven- or twelve-) point caps and small caps and is to be indented approximately 24mm. (6 picas)

d. The first two lines (at least) of the title page transcript are to be set in ten- (or eleven- or twelve-) point Roman lower case, set either solid or with a one-point leading. The first line is to begin flush with the left margin. The remaining lines of the title page transcript may be set in eight-point Roman lower case (to save space)

e. Series notes (if any), collation, size note, and similar data, are to be set in eight-point italic lower case unless, of course, the title entry is very short indeed. In any case they are to be run in after the title entry and are to be enclosed in parentheses

f. The phrase "1st of 2," etc. (where it is used) is to be set in eight-point boldface and is to be set flush with the right-hand margin of the last line of the collation (or following the last line)

g. The abstract is to be set in eight-point Roman, with the first line indented 8mm. (2 picas). The translation of the abstract, if there be one, shall follow in the same form and shall be separately paragraphed.

h. The microcard imprint is to be set in six-point lower case and is to be run below the card hole. This imprint shall consist of: on the left side the name of the issuing agency, on the right side this card's serial number with that agency and the date of its issuance (abbreviated)

i. In the center below the card hole, is to appear on every microcard the word "MICROCARD" in six-point block or Gothic type and, below it, in six-point or smaller italic type, the words "Trade Mark"

j. An extra two points of leading shall be placed: below the subject heading, below the author entry, below the main entry, below the first abstract

k. No cataloging entry shall ever be permitted to run over on a second card. Title page entry and abstract are always to be condensed sufficiently to get the entire entry on the face of one card

l. Abstracts are a suggested additional help, not an essential part of microcard procedure. Their value varies in the various subject fields; for some fields they would have very little value. They are therefore not obligatory. Any microcard issuing library desiring not to provide abstracts on its cards shall be entirely free to do so.

*Comment:* Its own patrons will very soon tell it whether its negative decision meets with their approval.

XX. The format of the micro-text side of microcards shall be in accordance with the following rules:

a. The basic, and always controlling, first rule shall be: that no more text shall ever be placed on any one card than can be placed there at a reduction which can surely be

*easily and clearly* read on available microcard reading machines

b. Pages shall be imposed for photographing in such a way that, on the completed card, beginning at the top, they will run in lines of pages from left to right across the card. Exceptions to this arrangement may occasionally occur to take care of folded inserts and other special material

c. All pages shall be photographed (or accounted for) except those which are entirely blank and are not included in the numbering

d. An allowance of at least 2½mm. margin on all four sides of the card shall be made

e. In imposing any text for microphotographing, a page (or, if necessary, pages) shall be omitted at the place where the card hole is going to come

f. Where the material photographed for a given card is going to cover only a small portion of the card (as in the case of single maps and prints) endeavor should be made to center it on the card.

XXI. The initial subject approach to microcards for library use shall be by classification symbols (*i.e.*, not by alphabetically filed subject headings). These shall be made in the following special form:

a. In its upper left and upper right corner respectively every microcard shall bear the Dewey Decimal Classification and the Library of Congress Classification symbols for the item microcarded, the classification being carried out as finely as possible

b. In those cases where the present classification symbols are inadequately differentiated for subject heading purposes and common sense dictates an obvious subclassification of the material (as, for example, a subarrangement by biographees' names under the biography symbol or by authors' names under such a classification heading as "Other 19th Century Essayists" or by in-

dividual town names under an unanalyzed county name), this subclassificational word (it will usually be a specific proper name) shall be inserted in the heading as a part of, or an adjunct to, the classification symbols

c. Between the two sets of classification symbols and on a line with them, there shall be given, on every microcard, a brief verbal translation of the meaning of the said symbols. If the classification symbols vary in the degree of the fineness of their subdivision, this translation phrase shall apply to the more finely classified of the two symbols

d. This translation phrase shall be explanatory only (*i.e.*, it shall have no filing value, as stated above). The subject approach to all microcards shall be a classified one, to be arrived at by filing the cards in a classified order in accordance with their classification symbols (and classification word, if any)

e. They may be filed according to either the Dewey Decimal Classification or the Library of Congress Classification, at the option of the receiving library, the unused set of classification symbols being simply ignored

f. Subfiling under any given classification heading may be either by author (as usually now) or by the date of the item's issuance or by both

g. The author subfiling shall be accomplished by using for this purpose the main author entry, not (as is usually the case now) by means of any special Cutter (or similar) surname abbreviation inserted as a part of the classification symbol

h. If a chronological classificational subfiling is desired (as it may be in the sciences, for instance) the imprint date can be used. To facilitate its use for this purpose it will be set in boldface type

i. If the microcard issuing library decides that a given item classifies beyond question, in two entirely different places in the classi-

fication, then two entirely separate and distinct subject heading cards shall be made for it. In making up global subscriptions covering both subject fields, author and title cards may, or may not, be duplicated

j. Rule XXI-i applies only to items requiring two classification entries. Single classification entries requiring relative index entry under two or more headings are taken care of by Rules XXII-XXIV.

XXII. Accompanying the first microcard issued in any given subject classification, or any subdivision thereof, the issuing library shall provide a printed relative index card (or cards where more than one seems needed) referring from the word (or words) selected for relative indexing to the classification symbols used on the microcard in question.

a. These relative index cards are intended, of course, to be filed alphabetically by the receiving library, according to their index entry word (or words) in an independent relative index file

b. They shall be printed in ten- (or eleven- or twelve-) point type and in three lines; the first line flush with the left margin, the second indented 12mm., the third flush with each outside margin

c. The first and third lines are to be set in boldface, the second in italic lower case, and the whole in this form:

**China, Missions in**

*See*

**275.1      BV3415**

d. Relative index cards will bear no micro-text on their backs.

XXIII. Whether cataloging analysis shall be done, or not done, for any given item shall be always a matter to be decided by the microcard issuing library. But if it chooses to treat any item as a composite item

(*i.e.*, to analyze it), then each analytic it makes shall require separate (*i.e.*, complete) microcard treatment in every respect.

(Rules XXIV-XXV, covering interlibrary division of responsibility for composite works crossing subject field lines, were temporarily laid on the table by the Microcard Committee.)

XXVIII. The duties of the Microcard Committee shall be:

a. to set a standard size, weight, and quality of cards for microcards, a standard microcard text format, and a standard microcard catalog entry and abstract format

b. to establish a standard scheme of microcard catalog author and classification headings and standardized rules for inter-filing them

c. to help libraries gradually to work out an allocated coverage of publishing fields in accordance with accepted library classification practice, in the hope that by such allocation a large number of cooperating libraries (or other publishing agencies) may ultimately assume joint responsibility for microcard reproduction without overlapping or duplication, so far as copyright may permit and scholars and libraries may request such reproduction

d. to issue lists of those libraries (or other agencies) volunteering to undertake the publication of microcards for library use; which lists shall, among other things, state the subject fields or materials for which the said libraries volunteer to assume microcard sponsorship

e. to seek information concerning, and to report on the value of, microcard materials and equipment offered for library use

f. so far as may be within its proper powers, to encourage uniform and equitable methods in the interlibrary interchange of microcards

g. to insist, in every way properly pos-

sible, upon the bibliographic standardization of the details of microcard text and headings, and of their size, format, etc., to the end that all microcards intended for library use may be immediately interfilable by any receiving library in one single filing arrangement, without that library's being burdened with any unnecessary expense of bibliographic adaptation

h. in general, to assist in every proper way in the efficient and orderly development of microcard issuance for scholarly use.

XXIX. It shall be clearly understood that the powers of the Microcard Committee are advisory only. It has no legal power to enforce, directly or indirectly, any rule or decision it may make. All that it can do, and all that it will do, will be to give information and advice to libraries or other agencies seeking to cooperate in the orderly and efficient development of microcard publication and distribution. Libraries are urged, however, to conform to the physical and bibliographical microcard standards set up by the Microcard Committee in order not to make difficult the interfiling of all microcards and so not to hinder the library dissemination and exchange of the materials of scholarship.

(Rule XXX, covering the question of providing funds to the Microcard Committee for it to do its work, was laid on the table.)

XXXI. The members of the Microcard Committee shall serve without compensation. As soon as the committee shall have funds available, the members shall, however, be reimbursed for any expenses they may incur in doing the work of the committee and for any traveling expense they may incur in attending any regularly called meeting of the committee. The committee shall appoint a chairman and a secretary.