

cation for the arrangement of books on the shelves of general libraries" looks like. But it is likely to be one of the less practical ventures in classification.—*Maurice F. Tauber, Columbia University.*

Classifiers' Guide

Guide to Use of Dewey Decimal Classification, Based on the Practice of the Decimal Classification Office at the Library of Congress. Lake Placid Club, N.Y.: Forest Press, 1962. 133p. \$5.00.

This *Guide* represents selective publication of the "manual of Decimal Classification Office practices," developed over the years by the most influential interpreter of the DC system. To prevent greater size than the schedules, the contents were chosen by rule of the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee that "the *Guide* should be concise and practical rather than theoretical or historical." Space is saved by printing information at one number only and referring from others. The entries are typical rather than exhaustively specific, depending upon analogy and judgment in their application. The confusion which follows such advice is reduced by numerous *ad hoc* decisions on what to do "when in doubt." Thus the collective biography of 920.02 is to be preferred to the universal variety of 920.01, which "must be very inclusive." But errors due to differences of experience and confidence will cause less separation here than in the choice between 311.2 (Statistical techniques) and 519.9 (Sampling methods), where no such final preference is suggested.

To judge this procedure manual within the limits of its stated purpose, we must applaud its timely and useful compilation. The aim to be concise is attained. Index and explanatory headings were omitted, as was virtually everything available in the schedules. The cost for this simplicity lies in the reference that must be made from one work to the other. The similarity of style and format make transition from schedules to *Guide* easier. But having gone this far, another step seems needed.

The *Guide* refers principally to edition sixteen of the classification, and the sound of seventeen which rises in the distance heralds obsolescence. We should encourage

publication of this work, incorporated within the tables and introductory material of DC. This would be comparable to merging the present *Decimal Classification Additions, Notes, and Decisions* into the next edition of Dewey.

By eschewing the theoretical, the *Guide* seldom tells us why a thing is done. Thus, at 808.831, we are told that collections of short stories from many literatures have this number, but collections from a specific literature must go with other fiction. One exception is the statement of two reasons for keeping civil service examinations together in 351.3, although this is "contrary to the general principle of classification by most specific subject." Elsewhere, contradictions are noted but not explained.

Historical or personal reasons for practices are avoided, "interesting tho it might be to deal with these subjects." Some entries, marked "History," explain differences between various editions which have been bases for DC numbers on LC cards. Occasional social commentary appears, as when explaining recent separation of sociological, psychological, or medical aspects of topics long grouped in the 170's under ethics.

Only once are we reminded of the connection between DC numbers and assignment of LC subject headings. The entry under 327 points out: "The Library of Congress subject heading usually includes 'relations (general)'. " Such service, admittedly, is not within the purpose of the Editorial Policy Committee. But it should not be overlooked that the present location, at the Library of Congress, of the office responsible for both editing and applying the DC offers an opportunity for integrating the two subsystems (DC classification with LC subject headings), which in many libraries are but parts of a single cataloging activity. The appearance of this *Guide* also points out the need for similar publication by the subject cataloging division of some current procedures and extended-scope notes for assigning LC subject headings.

Some theoretical aspects of classification do appear in "General Principles and Procedures," the twenty-one major subdivisions of which are best located by a summary table of contents. These rules are reminiscent of W. S. Merrill's *Code for Classifiers* (included by the *Guide* in a bibliography of twenty

Science Bibliography

American Scientific Books 1960-1962. Ed. by Phyllis B. Steckler. New York: Bowker, 1962. 474p. \$10.

Every librarian with an interest in scientific and technical books will want to own, or have ready access to, at least one copy of this handy bibliography which contains a wealth of information on some eight thousand selected entries cumulated from the monthly issues of the *American Book Publishing Record* (January 1960 to March 1962). This, according to the publisher, marks the first cumulation in any subject area from the well-known Bowker publication.

Entries are arranged principally by Dewey Decimal classification headings. The form of entry, in general, follows that used by the Library of Congress for its catalog cards and includes author, title, publisher, price, and catalog card number. In addition, brief descriptive annotations are included with many of the entries. Author and title indexes also are provided.

Some fastidious individuals will find the title of this bibliography to be in slight disagreement with the actual content. For, in fact, the books are not all American (books written by foreign authors and printed abroad but offered for sale in this country through a single designated agent are included), titles included are not all scientific (a majority of the books would be classed as medical and technical), items other than books are listed (several small pamphlets and other nonbook materials are included), and finally, the majority of the books appear to have been published in 1959-1961.

It would serve no useful purpose to refer in detail to each of the minor errors or misprints noted. In a few cases the prices given are not current, but the differences are slight and of little consequence.

In spite of the fact that this bibliography contains no information that was not previously available, the very convenience of this cumulation will make the volume a valuable addition to the reference bookshelf.—*John Sherrod, Science and Technology Division, Library of Congress.* ■ ■

items useful to the classifier). Form divisions are given seven pages of attention, but the need is felt for even more elaboration on the use of these all-pervasive "floating tables." Complete absence of any graphic aids to DC is everywhere apparent, but especially in this section, which would benefit from tabular display. At scattered spots, order of preference is recorded (e.g., at Form Divisions A and Form Divisions 061-063 A). The provision of a precedence table, comparing all possible pairs of numbers would give more clarity at a glance than is now possible.

There is need for check lists of questions the classifier should ask as each number is built: (Is the basic number more than five digits long? If so, see Form Division F (1). If not, continue.) That the Decimal Classification Office does recognize the utility of sequential instruction is apparent in General Principles and Procedures XA (Number Building), which gives a five-step procedure for preventing "divide like" instructions from going sour.

To examine this book outside its universe might yield as unsubstantial results as the review of a telephone directory which found it to be strong in its characters but weak in plot. It might be worthwhile, however, to emphasize the attitude revealed by the title. This work is not a guide to use of DC by readers. It is instead, as we take for granted, a guide to use by classifiers. Godfrey Dewey, in his preface, specifically points to "the classifier, the *user* of the classification." The book describes the input operations to the system, but concerns itself little, if at all, with any eventual output requirements. Only by accepting this inner perspective can the practices of the *Guide* be viewed as necessarily practical. But the world at large and nonlibrarians in particular refuse to abide by this rule. They will judge the practices and the *Guide* according to the facility or limitation it offers on their ability to find books. A basic limitation is the subordination of geographical to subject aspects, when an area program wishes to collect subject information relating to a given area. Each of us must make two separate evaluations of this book: first, how well it has accomplished what it set out to do, and second, what effect it will have when we put it into practice. The answers may be a world apart.—*Earl Farley, University of Kansas Libraries.*