

Library "Growing Pains"

Catalog System Changing

Students using the card catalog in the lobby of the University library are likely to be confronted with a strange conglomeration of letters and numbers in place of the old familiar Dewey Decimal numbers. This inconvenience must be tolerated for the time being, because it is part of the change-over from the Dewey system to the more "professional", more convenient, Library of Congress method of cataloging.

Funds Made Possible

Dr. George H. G. Jones, head librarian, states that the switch is being made possible by an increase in funds allotted to our library last fall, which was twice the budget of previous years.

According to Mr. Jones, the library's catalog department could not possibly keep up with the increased load of new books being processed without the change over.

Catalogued Separately

Under the old Dewey system each book had to be catalogued individually by a professional librarian who would determine the exact subject matter of the individual book, and then look it up by subject in a Dewey catalog.

Requires Time

Sometimes this process would require as much as an hour per book.

Under the new system, the catalog number, printed on cards sent from the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. is merely copied with no individual treatment by a professional librarian.

Aid to Layman

Besides being a great convenience to the professional librarian, the new system is valuable to the layman, in that new books are out of library offices and into circulation substantially faster.

Catalog librarians Ruch C. Newcomb and Shirley S. Fu are in charge of the actual work of changing to the new system.

Prefers Dewey

While Miss Newcomb prefers the Dewey Decimal System because she is more familiar with it, she admits that the Library of Congress System permits "an economy of personnel and time" in processing

Also, she stresses the fact that the numbering is universal, and that there is no difference in the number assigned to a given book by different librarians.

The Library of Congress System is also more precise and technical, in that it works on an alphabetical rather than a numerical basis.

Miss Newcomb added that the new system is more "professional" in that it is used in virtually all larger university libraries.

Problems Occur

Miss Fu prefers the Library of Congress system because of its efficiency and universality. Problems do occur, she says, with the small minority of books and pamphlets which are not assigned numbers by the Library of Congress.

In these cases, the Dewey System was easier to work with. In the new system the cataloger would have to improvise a number similar to the one given by the librarians in Washington.

This, understandably, can cause difficulties.

More Advantages Than Problems

However, says Miss Fu, the advantages far outweigh the small number of cases in which this difficulty would occur.

On the whole, she sees the use of this new system as a big step in the growth of our library.

Easier for Computers

Dr. Jones points out that, while there may be certain "growing pains" in the process of conversion, the library will definitely be the better for the change, especially in the not too distant future when library cataloging will be computerized.

This new system will more readily facilitate programming.



Library employee, Mary Edith Christopher, assists in the conversion of the card catalog to the Library of Congress System.