

LibraryCrunch

Service for the Next Generation Library: A Library 2.0 Perspective by Michael Casey

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De-Dewefication Begins

Last [discussed here](#) in May of 2006, de-Dewefication has begun at the new Perry branch library in Maricopa county, Arizona. The library will open without using Dewey classification. Their books will be shelved by topic.

Maricopa County officials say the Perry Branch library will be organized like a bookstore. Instead of assigning them numbers, the tens of thousands of books will be shelved by topic.

County librarians say it's time to do away with the century-old Dewey Decimal system.

They say it's too confusing for people to hunt down books using those long strings of numbers and letters.

The idea to get rid of Dewey came from Marshall Shore -- an adult service coordinator for the Maricopa County Library District.

He says that patrons are frustrated by the old cataloging system. He says that the libraries must adapt to their customers needs.

Articles [here](#) and [here](#).

Posted by Michael on May 31, 2007 09:37 AM | [Permalink](#)

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How to classify and shelve print materials has long been a problem that has plagued librarians. If your customers are primarily browsers, classifying by general subject rather than a Dewey number may be worth investigating.

It must be hard to be first with something that will seem so radical to many librarians. I'm sure they will get their fair share of criticism, but if this style of shelving is best for their customers then I applaud them for changing to meet the needs of their users.

Posted by: Laura Savastinuk | [May 31, 2007 01:42 PM](#)

Hi!
I have tagged you for the 8 Things Meme! :-)

See here:
<http://pimp-my-library.blogspot.com/2007/05/8-things-meme.html>

Amy

Posted by: [Amy](#) | [May 31, 2007 03:09 PM](#)

While agree that customers prefer the bookstore style of organization, the biggest difference between a bookstore and a library is that the customer doesn't return the book each time in a bookstore.

How exactly will the books be re-shelved? Will there be stickers or other identifying marks? Or will the shelving page decide where to place items? What will the online catalog have for a location? I'll be very interested to hear in the long term report when it comes to customers wanting to find a specific book rather than browse. As my colleague described it, will they get the Barnes & Noble shrug when an item in the catalog is nowhere to be found. :0

Loretta

Posted by: Loretta | [May 31, 2007 03:37 PM](#)

@ Loretta -

I'd assume they'd shelve by subject and then by Author, same as bookstores.

I'm actually kind of thrilled by this post. It makes me a wee bit giddy. I always secretly (desperately) wanted the fiction section to be shelved by genre (instead of by author...oh how it pains me!)... I hadn't even thought of reshelving the nonfic as well. Very interesting idea and I'm anxious to see how it works for them!

Posted by: [LibraryNation \(Kathleen\)](#) | [May 31, 2007 07:41 PM](#)

You really should check out this video, about the book everything is miscellaneous, and the author talks about the dewey system starting at 20 minutes.
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=2159021324062223592&q;=type%3Agoogle+engEDU>

Posted by: [infodoodads](#) | [June 1, 2007 05:40 PM](#)

It's going to be interesting to see how this L2 experiment works out. I predict a fiery crash and burn. Entropy is ubiquitous, even while implementing a structured system like Dewey. I hope they are using RFID too so they will be able to locate their lost items via tricorder..

Posted by: [Woeful](#) | [June 1, 2007 08:24 PM](#)

It is an exciting idea, and doubtless works for a small branch library. I'm not sure how successful it would be in a major academic place, though.

I used to work at the University of London Library--some 15 floors of volumes--and there were a number of different systems, including some from private collections.

My favorite was called "fixed location"--every book had a specific address. So 13b7 meant aisle 13, second shelf, 7th book in. It was the only section where books never got mis-shelved.

Posted by: [Carolyn Grantham](#) | [June 1, 2007 09:11 PM](#)

Ah yes, by subject of course. But who/how is the subject going to be decided? Are the subjects going to be very broad (in which case how will you find anything!) or narrow (in which case who/how will it be decided). Authors rarely like to write a book that fit into a single subject (one of the reasons cataloging is so complicated at times) so there you are back on the road of 'cataloging' the book again. :)

I do think this will be a very interesting situation to watch. I think the customers will love it (mostly), but it will be interesting to see how much back end work this causes.

Posted by: Loretta | [June 2, 2007 01:26 PM](#)

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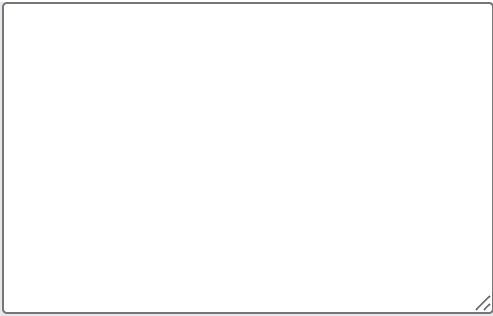
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