



# Decimal Classification

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## Foreword

"We earnestly request all users to give us the benefit of their criticism in order that sometime our successors may actually bring out the perfect book'" This invitation which appeared in the foreword to the Standard (15th) edition was, of course, not accepted by 'all users' but a generous number did respond in print, through correspondence or orally. This extensive criticism, both favorable and unfavorable, cannot be summarized here but its constructive nature provided specific guidance for the preparation of this edition and led to a request on the part of the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation that the Library of Congress assume the responsibility for the editorial work. Responsibility for editorial policy rests with the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee, a joint committee of the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation, the American Library Association, and the Library of Congress.

Editions 2-14 of the classification were each characterized largely by the addition of expansions of particular parts of the classification. After the 14th edition appeared in 1942 many American librarians came to believe that a standard edition, in which all parts of the classification were expanded to the same degree, would be preferable to one in which some parts appeared in extreme detail while others were relatively unelaborated.<sup>1</sup> In response to this desire for a standard edition the 15th edition which appeared in 1951 included reductions of those parts which were deemed to be in too great detail, expansions of parts insufficiently detailed, and, in addition to provision for new concepts, a modernization of the terminology.

Criteria for the 16th edition were adopted by the Editorial Policy Committee in 1953, and revised in 1955, to guide the editorial staff in the preparation of an edition to meet the criticisms that the 15th edition was insufficient for the needs of many libraries. In the restatement, the objectives of this edition were described as follows.

The 16th Edition shall be designed for use in the classification of books and similar materials in general libraries, regardless of size except (1) those libraries which prefer to use an abridged edition and (2) those libraries with special collections which prefer to use close

<sup>1</sup> Clapp, V. W. *Progress towards the 16th edition of Dewey* *Journal of Cataloging and Classification*, v. 12, p. 197-98, Oct. 1956