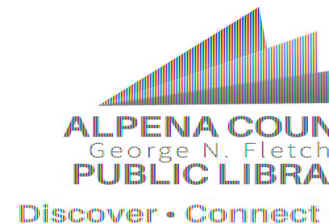


Browse Method: Why not Dewey?



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What do you mean you don't use the Dewey Decimal System?!?

Disadvantages of the Dewey Decimal System:

- Lengthy call numbers that do not make sense to the average library patron
- Related subjects are not classified with one another.
- Cultural Biases towards white, European, and Protestant interested and populations.
- Developed when the stacks were closed to the public

Overall, we found that our juvenile nonfiction was not user-friendly.



But then...

Book Challenges.

Demands for the removal of books from the youth collections.

Demands to limit access to books certain people felt were offensive and inappropriate.

What can we do?

Solutions offered:

- Rating system
- Stickers with LGBTQ classification
- Placing them on a higher shelf
- Library cards that limited access to certain subjects

Those were not viable solutions.

We started to research other solutions within the library world.



I don't know what this book is about...

Dewey decimal guides were insufficient for parents to navigate the nonfiction collection.

How many parents or caregivers come in to find as many books as they can on the current fixation their child has?

Wouldn't it be easier if all of the books about space-space travel, astronauts, the solar system, and more-were all together and clearly labeled with their subject?

So we got to thinking...

There had to be other ways to classify the books.

- [FrankenDewey](#): a form of adapted DDC
- [BISAC](#): Book Industry Standards and Communications
- [Shelf Logic](#): very basic modified BISAC style system
- [Monarch Method](#): Another modified BISAC model but mixes fiction and nonfiction

Each of these had their flaws that did not seem like the best solution for what we wanted to do.

And then...



Presenting: The Browse Method

Cumberland Public Library in Rhode Island had ditched Dewey in 2018 in the hopes of making their nonfiction collection more accessible for the average library user. Melissa Chiavaroli, Head of Reference, had noticed a trend of patrons using Google for their information needs instead of the library collection.

She and her team set out to develop a way to make their collections more user friendly and approachable.

The Browse method was born.

How does it work?

- Streamlines the collection into nine major categories with the 52 BISAC subjects housed within these nine category headings. Four additional subjects were added to the main layout: Entertaining, Sustainable Living, Genealogy, and Geography.
- Call numbers in The Browse Method are defined on a four-digit number system 0000–9999. Each of the major categories has a 100–1500 number run. No number repeats elsewhere in the collection and there are no decimals.
- Spine labels will use plain English terminology and color coding for patron accessibility.

And the best parts of this solution?

- Low cost to implement!
- Works with any ILS!
- Collection management will be easier!
- Completely customizable!

AND...

Cumberland Library provides an amazing resource page for switching over. Including:

- A spreadsheet with all of the categories, subcategories, call numbers, and color coding.
- A PowerPoint presentation with talking points to get staff, board, and community buy-in.
- Category flowchart
- Staff infographics
- Patron poster
- Melissa herself. She was wonderful with answering questions we had.

Browse Method



Uses call numbers however...

They have understandable information including:

1. Number (For staff use)
2. Location + Main category
3. Secondary category
4. Authors last name

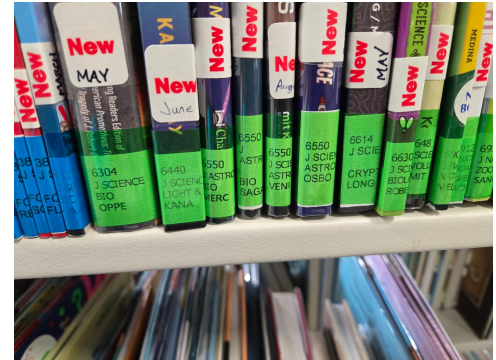
i.e

6614

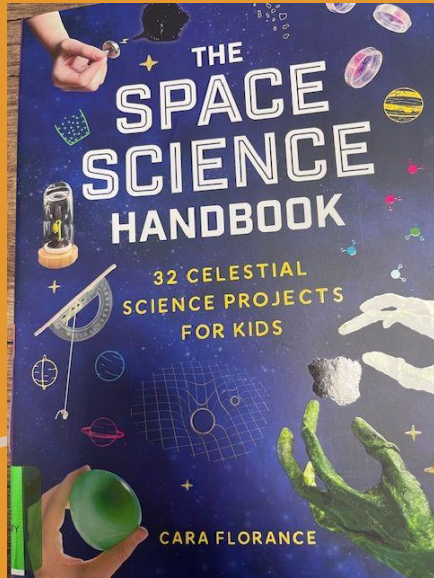
J SCIENCE

CRYPTIDS

LONG



Let's catalog a new book from start to finish!



"Embark on an intergalactic adventure where you'll study bright galaxies, envision new planets, and explore futuristic technology in this imaginative science activity book for kids!"

We have a science book with experiments related to space.

What category and subcategory would we assign?

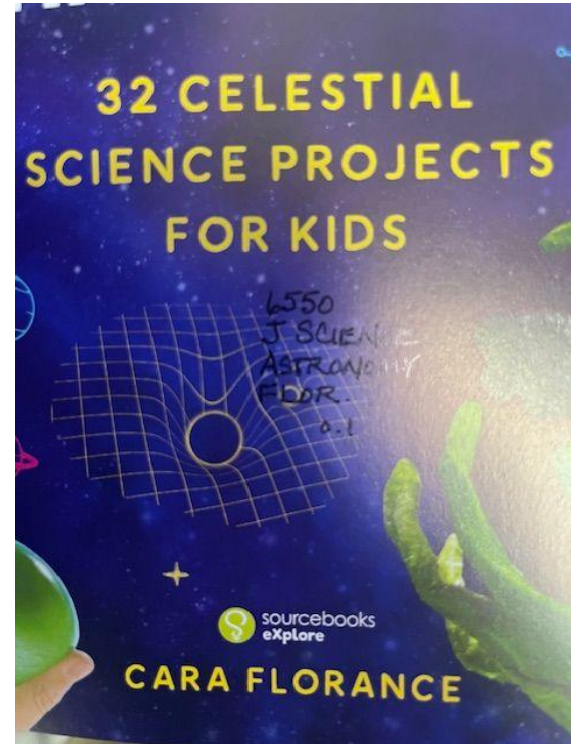
Looking at the Browse spreadsheet, we would first assign a main category.

Since it is a science book, the main category would be Science.

Now on to the subcategory...

Assigning the subcategory

- Look at the content of the book. What area of science is the focus?
- Look at the Browse list of subcategories under Science. Which one best describes the book?
- Unsure? Use a third party resource like Ingram or Edelweiss Plus to help you!
- Are there multiple subcategories it could be listed under? Use one that will make it easier for your patrons to discover. You know them best!



Finishing up!

Your spine label components:

Call Number: 6550

Main Category: J SCIENCE

Subcategory: Astronomy

Author: FLOR

Overlay label: Green



Wait, I want to create a special section in the collection...



Category not in original Browse Method scheme?

What to do? Add it in!

Defining category:

Books written for children with guardians' guidance in mind. Written to help parents teach their child about topics/issues.

It's Perfectly Normal

by Robie H. Harris

Call number

1334

J PARENTING RESOURCES

SEX HEALTH

HA

What's the Big Deal?

by Stanton L. Jones

Call number:

1334

J PARENTING RESOURCES

SEX HEALTH

JO

Parents/Caregiver Comments:

It's so much easier to look for books for my child!

I love this!

Staff Comments:

This makes so much more sense!

When are we doing this to the adult collection?

Things to watch out for:

Unconsciously censoring your collection so that all of the “sensitive topics” end up in one section.

Being too broad with selecting your sub-category.

Spend money on good labels and a printer. We had issues with fading.

So how's it going so far?

Thank you!

Resources:

<https://www.cumberlandlibrary.org/browse-method>
<https://www.lisedunetwork.com/advantages-disadvantages-ddc-dewey-decimal-classification-scheme/>
<https://www.slj.com/story/ditching-dewey-libraries-These-Ideas-Can-Get-You-Started-on-Genrefication>

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