

T D WILSON

an introduction to

---

chain indexing



A PROGRAMMED TEXT

**an introduction to**

---

**chain indexing**



PROGRAMMED TEXTS IN  
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE  
SERIES EDITOR C D BATTY BA FLA

---

An introduction to colon classification  
by C D Batty

An introduction to the Dewey decimal classification  
by C D Batty

An introduction to Sears list of subject headings  
by Philip Corrigan

An introduction to UDC  
by Jean M Perreault

Learn to use books and libraries  
by T W Burrell

T D WILSON

an introduction to

---

chain indexing

CLIVE BINGLEY



LONDON

---

FIRST PUBLISHED 1971 BY CLIVE BINGLEY LTD  
16 PEMBRIDGE ROAD LONDON W11  
SET IN 10 ON 12 POINT LINOTYPE PLANTIN  
AND PRINTED IN THE UK BY  
THE CENTRAL PRESS (ABERDEEN) LTD  
COPYRIGHT © T D WILSON 1971  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
0 85157 109 3

## CONTENTS

---

Foreword, by Dr S R Ranganathan 7

Preface 11

Instructions 13

Text 15

Appendix I Worked examples 76

Appendix II Self-test 78

Appendix III Worked examples in other schemes 81

Appendix IV Bibliography 84

Topic index 85

## FOREWORD

by Dr S R Ranganathan

---

Determining the subject heading of a book is an important piece of work in cataloguing. When I learnt cataloguing in the University College, London, in 1924, much attention was not paid to this. In a few classes we were asked to guess the subject heading. In the course of the year, I found that there was some guidance in the *Rules for dictionary catalogue*, by C A Cutter. But the application of these rules required judgement of an involved nature. When I began to teach cataloguing in the Madras University in 1929, I found that the students did not feel sufficiently enlightened by this method of fixing the subject heading. Therefore, I introduced them to the use of the American Library Association's *List of subject headings*. Two difficulties were felt by the students in the use of this *List*. One was that for a new subject not represented in the *List*, it was not easy for them to construct the subject heading. Secondly, the abler students felt no challenge in this method; they felt bored.

By 1935, I realised that the determination of the subject heading was in essence equivalent to the determination of the class number. This made me examine whether the work already done in assigning class number cannot also serve in assigning subject heading. I examined the *List* from this angle. But there was no explicit clue given in that

---

book as to how the committee arrived at their several subject headings. This made me find out how they might have arrived at them. After some trial, it struck me that the headings in the *List* were closely correlated to decimal class numbers. Then I tried to work out the nature of the correlation. This was the genesis of 'chain procedure', now named 'chain indexing'. I applied this method with the colon class number also as the basis. I found that in a few cases where a heading in the *List* did not agree with the decimal chain, it agreed with the colon chain. This made me infer that :

1 The committee on subject headings was more sensitive to the readers' approach than the decimal class number;

2 The colon class number was as sensitive to the readers' approach as the committee was.

This made me feel that a secondary use of chain procedure might well be a means of comparing two different schemes for classification.

I incorporated the idea and the method of chain indexing in my *Theory of library catalogue* (1938). The rules of my classified catalogue code for subject heading were reframed on the basis of chain indexing in its second edition (1945). But I had brought the chain indexing method into use even in 1936, both in the catalogue of the

---

Madras University Library and in teaching cataloguing in that university. I found that the cataloguer felt a considerable saving of time by the use of this method and that it also gave satisfaction to the students, in fact I found them enjoying this method of establishing subject headings. It is gratifying to learn that chain indexing has become the commonly accepted method today, as Mr Wilson puts it.

During the last thirty years the chain indexing method has been continuously refined to meet the requirements of micro subjects. This process of refinement has opened up an apparently never-ending line of research for cataloguers. This in itself is a great merit of chain indexing. Many interesting results of research in chain indexing are coming up almost every year in the Annual Seminar of the Documentation Research and Training Centre (Bangalore). These concern the advanced cataloguing of micro documents.

When I began teaching in 1917, I soon realised the necessity for replacing the mass-lecturing method of teaching by the method of individual instruction. I was then teaching mathematics. I found that it gave a very good return to the satisfaction of myself and that of the students. I, therefore, adopted this method in teaching library science also. I have been continuing it all these years. I am glad that this method

---

of individual instruction is coming into vogue in the schools of library science in the UK. It puts the students ever in the active mood of search through personal effort. This is the best way of helping each student to educate himself to his own fullness, along his own lines, and at his own speed. Now a tendency has begun to print and publish the 'notes of lessons' suited to this method. For the first time, I heard the expression 'scrambled textbook' to denote this kind of notes of lessons in the books of Mr C D Batty relating to the teaching of classification by decimal classification and colon classification respectively.

Mr Wilson has now brought out a scrambled textbook on teaching chain indexing. First I wondered why he asked me to write this introductory note to his book. Further correspondence showed me that he was a student in the school of library science at Newcastle when I conducted a few lessons there in 1956. This fact has added a personal charm to the opportunity given to me to write these few words as a foreword to Mr Wilson's excellent *Introduction to chain indexing: a programmed textbook*.

S R RANGANATHAN

## PREFACE

---

This programmed text is intended as an elementary introduction to a subject which is often a source of considerable difficulty for students. For this reason I have emphasized the most fundamental aspects of the technique: for more advanced methods and problems the student is referred to the brief bibliography.

The text has been tested with groups of students and when used as a class text it has been found that the best method is to use it as a supplement to normal lectures, that is, giving additional examples and exercises as students complete a specific problem area dealt with in the text.

I would like to acknowledge here the assistance I have received from my colleagues in the Department of Librarianship, particularly Mr G A Ibbs who field-tested the text. I am also grateful to the editor of this series, Mr David Batty, for his helpful criticisms of the original draft, and to Mr Derek Austin of BNB who made some last-minute suggestions, and I am especially indebted to Dr S R Ranganathan who made many useful suggestions and who wrote the foreword. Needless to say, for any errors and eccentricities that remain I am wholly responsible.

I also feel that due recognition ought to be given to the work of

---

A J Wells and his colleagues at BNB who pioneered the technique in our national bibliography, and did it so effectively as to create what is in effect a 'national authority file', consulted whenever practical problems arise.

Those parts of the book directly reproduced from the 17th edition of the *Dewey decimal classification*, and from the *British national bibliography* are by permission of the copyright owners.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge a major debt by dedicating this book to my mother and to the memory of my father: without their self-sacrifices my professional career, and hence this book, would have been impossible.

T D WILSON  
BSC (ECON), FLA  
Principal lecturer  
Department of Librarianship  
Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic

## INSTRUCTIONS

---

This is a 'scrambled' or 'programmed' textbook. It is based on the knowledge that different individuals progress at different speeds in learning and allows them to go at their own pace, rather than having to 'run with the pack' in a lecture.

The classification scheme used in the examples in this book is the 17th edition of the Dewey *Decimal classification* (DC), and you will need a copy of the schedules by you as you work through the book.

Read each piece of instruction carefully and choose an answer from those given at the end of the section, or do the piece of practical work set. Then turn to the frame indicated by the answer and proceed as before.

Above all don't be disheartened by making mistakes—that's how we learn.

Now turn to frame 1 and begin.

---

**Frame 1**

One of the chief types of library catalogue is that in which the major section contains main entries arranged in classified order by the notational symbols of the classification scheme in use in the library.

This kind of catalogue is called :

A dictionary catalogue—frame 2

A classified catalogue—frame 3

An alphabetico/classed catalogue—frame 4



