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ORGANIZATION, STORAGE AND
DISTRIBUTION OF NON-BOOK
MATERIALS IN THE SCHOOL
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

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State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Educational Media Section
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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Revised Edition

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ORGANIZATION, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION ON NON-BOOK
MATERIALS IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The philosophy that all resource material whether print or non-print should be available through the central library media center complex is becoming widely accepted. This philosophy has been advocated in national library standards for years. The most recent, Standards for School Media programs, a joint production of the American Association of School Librarians and the Department of Audiovisual Instruction (now Association for Educational Communication and Technology) published in 1969, continue this advocacy. Iowa standards and guidelines for elementary and secondary schools and for area schools either state or imply that non-book materials, as well as book, must be cataloged in a central library or media center situation.

In order to accomplish such a goal, librarians and media specialists are faced with the problem of how to organize, store and distribute audiovisual or non-print materials. While some feel they have a satisfactory system, many are finding their present system inadequate especially as the amount of material and of individual student use rises. The first problem to be resolved is that of how to organize these materials. This includes the choice of a location symbol.

In the past it has been assumed that the philosophy of the library of media center regarding accessibility of these materials to students and teachers was the major determining factor influencing the location or classification system. If non-print materials were to be in an open area with student access, the Dewey Decimal classification system was an aid to users interested in certain subject areas. The shelf list file, kept in Dewey Deciaml order, also made a quick subject bibliography available to teachers or students. If materials were to be requested from a closed stack area, a subject classification was considered less important. Some might still prefer to retain it because of the value of the shelf list, but it was not considered to expedite shelving or retrieval of materials appreciably. Therefore, others felt that the catalog provided sufficient subject approach and relied on accession numbers coupled with a media code, (eg., FS101 for the one hundred first filmstrip received or processed).

Now with larger collections and more student use a subject classification is helpful for either open or closed collections since it allows the user or attendant to find related materials more readily. The Dewey Decimal Classification System seems the logical system to use. It is almost exclusively the classification system used for elementary and secondary school libraries or media centers. It is used by an increasing number of companies supplying commercial cataloging and it is mandated for use by Iowa elementary schools for all types of materials.

Basically the total problem of cataloging non-book materials is little different from cataloging books except that there are fewer commercial and professional helps in this area and most librarians have had much more practical experience in handling books. Those commercial and professional helps that are available and that are just beginning to flood the market have not yet achieved the degree of standardization which the beginner would like to see. This leads to a number of problems.

Originally some companies and guidebooks advocated color coding and abbreviated symbols such as the "FS" above. However, color coding ran into difficulty as the number and variety of materials available in the non-book area grew. Accordingly, an increasing number of manuals, national organizations and commercial cataloging and processing companies are advocating that no color coding be used.

Abbreviations or symbols are helpful only so long as they are easily and quickly understood by the user. Because of this, some libraries type on the full word such as "Filmstrip" or buy a series of stamps which accomplish the same thing in less space. Since the Library of Congress cards include the designation for non-book materials in parentheses behind the title, an increasing number of manuals and commercial services are including this designation. This can be the only reference to the medium or can be coupled with the use of a term or a symbol over the call number.

The first edition of Non-Book Materials, the Organization of Integrated Collections, published, 1973, by the Canadian Library Association, distributed in the United States by the American Library Association will help resolve many of the problems which have plagued non-book cataloging. It provides widely accepted standards to guide choice of main entry, uniform terminology, etc.

Already, at least one major non-book jobber is gearing up to consider standardization of commercial cataloging. Since the Canadian guide follows the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules and since it provides at least limited examples of cards for different types of non-book materials, non-book cataloging should be simpler than ever before.

The philosophy, sophistication, location and facilities of the library or media center will influence not only the cataloging and organization of non-book materials but also their storage and distribution.

The building level center which prefers open access for all students to most materials will choose different kinds of storage from the center which, because of philosophy or facilities stores some materials, such as audiovisual materials, back magazine files and equipment, in a closed access area.

Basically, the trend seems to be for the building level center to make as many materials immediately available to students as is practical. This fits with the organization by Dewey Decimal classification.

In some cases shelving or storage units have not been conducive to classed storage. The filmstrip cabinets are probably one of the bigger problems. But industry is finally realizing that the burgeoning materials now available demand more attractive and flexible storage. Attractive record bins similar to those used in commercial outlets are now available for media centers and libraries. Larger one-purpose units are replacing the small many-purpose storage units which were once about the only type of audiovisual storage units available. Some companies are presenting filmstrip cabinets which allow filmstrips to be moved in the rows.

In the meantime, the always versatile open library shelving is being made even more versatile. Picture book and record shelving has been a familiar part of many libraries for years. Now adaptations, either as special shelving or as units to place on shelving, are available for tapes, films, filmstrips, filmstrip sets, sound filmstrips, etc. Standard shelving has even been adapted to hold frames to support hanging files, similar to those used in standard letter and legal sized office files, for pamphlet and periodical storage, and one company has introduced multi-media hanging shelving

More types of storage are provided for "advertising". Paperback display shelving or racks provide a case in point as do the record bins mentioned earlier. Such shelving can be used in a browsing or classed storage system.

Audiovisual "books" - cartons to hold one or more items in the same or different formats are also increasingly available. These can be used on open shelving for the more normal format-related storage, i.e., shelving first by format, then by classification. However, it also begins to make more practical the still experimental intershelving by classification regardless of format.

Distribution of non-book materials has been quite limited in the past. Frequently audiovisual materials were circulated only to teachers and used only under their direction. Now audiovisual materials are used by students and teachers in the library or media center and classrooms, and increasingly are checked out for home use. This means that a relatively quick and accurate check out system is needed. With records, reel tapes, sound filmstrips, etc., a card-pocket can be affixed just as to a book. The audiovisual "book" also lends itself to this. With other materials, cards similar to the familiar magazine and pamphlet check out cards can be used. For system level and equipment check out, a visible record type file where reservations can be shown is frequently used. It should be noted that as students check out more and more non-print material it will probably become necessary for them to be able to check out appropriate equipment. This may be checked out for use in the library or media center, in the building or outside the school.

There are many manuals available to assist with cataloging non-print material. However the bibliography appended attempts to list only a few major tools related to cataloging non-book materials in harmony with the Anglo American cataloging rules or supported by the American Library Association.

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