
The new ecumenism: Exploration of a DDC/UDC view of religion

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Abstract:

This paper explores the feasibility of using the Universal Decimal Classification's revised religion scheme as the framework for an alternative view of 200 Religion in the Dewey Decimal Classification, and as a potential model for future revision. The study investigates the development of a top-level crosswalk between the two systems, and a detailed mapping using Buddhism as a case study.

1. Introduction

For some years the editors of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) have been seeking ways of furthering collaboration and fostering interoperability between the two systems. An opportunity has now presented itself, in the need to provide a more universally acceptable approach to religion. DDC and UDC have a worldwide user base, and both classifications have to provide solutions to meet the needs of today's multi-faith environment. The two systems are historically rooted in a firm Christian tradition and each has attempted to accommodate itself to the modern world in the recent past. UDC implemented a totally new scheme six years ago (UDC Consortium, 2000). The editors of the DDC have also improved the structure of 200 Religion over the last ten years, but Dewey's strategy has been largely incremental, supplemented by the ongoing provision of local solutions in the form of optional arrangements.

This paper explores the feasibility of using the UDC religion scheme as the framework for an alternative view of 200 Religion in the DDC, and as a potential model for future revision. The study investigates the development of a top-level crosswalk between the two systems, and a detailed mapping using Buddhism as a case study.

2. The present situation

2.1 Religion in the DDC

In the past two editions, the Dewey editors have reduced the Christian bias in the 200 Religion schedule and provided deeper representations of the world's religions. In DDC 21 (Dewey, 1996), the editors moved comprehensive works on Christianity from 200 to 230, relocated the standard subdivisions for Christianity from 201–209 to specific numbers in 230–270, and integrated the standard subdivisions of comparative religion with those for religion in general in 200.1–.9. They also revised and expanded the schedules for 296 Judaism and 297 Islam.

DDC 22 (Dewey, 2003), the current print edition of the DDC, contains the rest of the relocations and expansions outlined in the two-edition plan. A key change at the top level in DDC 22 is the relocation of specific aspects of religion from 291 to the 201–209 span vacated in DDC 21. The numbers in the 201–209 span are used for general topics in religion,

and as the source for notation to address specific aspects of religions in 292–299. Other improvements in DDC 22 include expansion of the sources of the Bahai Faith at 297.938, and revision and expansion of the developments in 299.6 for religions originating among Black Africans and people of Black African descent, and in 299.7–.8 for religions of American native origin. Even with these changes, 200 Religion continues to feature Christianity prominently at the three-digit level.

At the present time, radical transformation of 200 Religion to give preferred treatment to another religion is only possible as a local solution using one of the five optional arrangements described under 290 Other religions:

Option A: Class the religion in 230–280, its sources in 220, comprehensive works on the religion in 230; in that case class the Bible and Christianity in 298

Option B: Class in 210, and add to base number 21 the numbers following the base number for the religion in 292–299, e.g., Hinduism 210, Mahabharata 219.23; in that case class philosophy and theory of religion in 200, its subdivisions 211–218 in 201–208, specific aspects of comparative religion in 200.1–200.9, standard subdivisions of religion in 200.01–200.09

Option C: Class in 291, and add to base number 291 the numbers following the base number for that religion in 292–299, e.g., Hinduism 291, Mahabharata 291.923

Option D: Class in 298, which is permanently unassigned

Option E: Place first by use of a letter or other symbol, e.g., Hinduism 2H0 (preceding 220), or 29H (preceding 291 or 292); add to the base number thus derived, e.g., to 2H or to 29H, the numbers following the base number for the religion in 292–299, e.g., Shivaism 2H5.13 or 29H.513

Option A vacates the numbers devoted to Christianity for use by another religion. Options B and C provide preferred treatment (and shorter or equivalent numbers) for a specific religion. Both explicitly derive notation directly from the schedules for the preferred arrangement.

Option D provides preferred treatment and shorter numbers for a specific religion by relocating it to 298, a permanently unassigned number. Option E provides preferred treatment (and shorter or equivalent numbers) for a specific religion. Option E also uses notation derived from the schedules, but introduces the use of mixed notation. Each of these options presents some problems and none gives the opportunity to provide an even-handed approach to the great religions of the world.

There is little information on how Dewey users are using the five options. The Dewey editors recently surveyed Dewey users about the use of options, and received a total of fifty-six responses from thirteen countries (Mitchell, 2005). Only nine respondents reported use of one of the five options, and no one reported use of options D or E. Instead of adding yet another optional arrangement, the Dewey editors are studying the wholesale replacement of the current set of options with one alternative arrangement that might also serve as the future framework for 200 Religion. The new UDC religion scheme is a promising model.

2.2 Religion in the UDC

In 2000, UDC published a totally new classification for Class 2 Religion and Theology which has subsequently been incorporated into the latest version of the system (*UDC*, 2005). The new version of Class 2 aims to rise above the biased approach of the earlier version and treat all religions equally. Broughton notes, “There is no concept of value or priority attached to the order of faiths; each is regarded as having equivalent status, even where this is not reflected notationally” (Broughton, 2000, 60). The classification is totally faceted and consists

of a main table enumerating the major religions of the world in the order of their date of foundation:

2	Religion. Theology
21	Prehistoric and primitive religions
22	Religions originating in the Far East
23	Religions originating in Indian sub-continent
24	Buddhism
25	Religions of antiquity. Minor cults and religions
26	Judaism
27	Christianity. Christian churches and denominations
28	Islam
29	Modern spiritual movements

The historically based listing of religions is amplified through an auxiliary table which lists the principal categories and phenomena of religion, to provide for the expression of the needed concepts. In outline, it is as follows:

2-1	Theory and philosophy of religion. Nature of religion. Phenomenon of religion
2-2	Evidences of religion
2-3	Persons in religion
2-4	Religious activities. Religious practice
2-5	Worship broadly. Cult. Rites and ceremonies
2-6	Processes in religion
2-7	Religious organization and administration
2-8	Religions characterised by various properties
2-9	History of the faith, religion, denomination or church

This auxiliary table contains great detail under each of the above heads, and is used to amplify and create the necessary classmarks. Every main number can have as many concepts added on to the base notation as necessary to provide the detail needed to express the elements of a specific religion. Notation for multiple facets may be added to the number for any religion; the recommended citation order is retroactive in nature. For example, teaching in the Torah on divorce is 26-454-242:

26	Judaism
-454	Divorce
-242	Torah. The Law. The Pentateuch

There will also be the necessity in certain cases to provide specific detail for concepts that are associated with one faith specifically. Wherever this need arises, differential facets expand the base auxiliary table, so as to provide for the specific needs of the subject, though in fact the number of places where the general auxiliary has been found insufficiently detailed is surprisingly small.

3. DDC-UDC view of religion

3.1 Top-level crosswalk

The authors are engaged in a study to explore the use of UDC's Class 2 as a model for development or replacement for 200 Religion in the DDC. As the first step in the project, we developed a general mapping between the two classification systems at the level of representation for each major religion, preserving the notational development under each religion. Table 1 contains an excerpt of the top-level crosswalk.

Table 1: Crosswalk between religions in UDC and DDC

UDC		DDC	
23	Religions of the Indian Subcontinent	294	Indic religions
231	Vedism	294.509013	Vedic religion
232	Brahmanism	294.5	(in class-here note)
233	Hinduism narrowly	294.5	Hinduism
234	Jainism	294.4	Jainism
235	Sikhism	294.6	Sikhism
24	Buddhism	294.3	Buddhism
...		...	
26	Judaism	296	Judaism
27	Christianity	230	Christianity
28	Islam	297	Islam

UDC and DDC both place general topics of religion at the beginning of the religion schedule; we did not attempt a mapping between those topics in the initial stage of the study. One problem that surfaced immediately in the top-level mapping of major faiths was the difference in the treatment of the Bible in the two systems. The UDC includes sources of religion within the development for each religion, with religion-specific enumeration provided where needed. For example, the books of the Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible are enumerated under Judaism and Christianity, respectively. Dewey provides a separate class for the Bible outside the development of Christianity and Judaism in recognition of its role as a source of both religions. For the purposes of the initial top-level mapping, we have retained the separate treatment of the Bible found in Dewey. We plan to explore other solutions at a later stage in the project.

As part of the preliminary study, we plan to test the top-level mapping as a browsing view of the DDC, stripped of notation at the top layer. Such a browsing view will provide a chronological/regional structure for religion in Dewey while retaining the underlying DDC notation. The top-level mapping can also serve as the basis for a detailed development of an optional arrangement of the DDC based on the UDC structure. We are investigating two approaches to the detailed development of an optional arrangement using Buddhism as our case study: 1) use the UDC base number for the religion and apply the DDC schedule notation and number building instructions to that base number; 2) adopt the UDC structure in full.

3.2 Use of UDC 24 + DDC notation

In the first approach to a detailed development based on the UDC, we simply moved 294.3 Buddhism to an earlier position in the Dewey hierarchy by replacing 294.3 with 24, the UDC base number for Buddhism, and applying the Dewey notation beyond 294.3 directly to 24 Buddhism (Buddhism itself is represented by 240). At the three-digit level, this results in the following:

- 240 Buddhism
- 243 Religious mythology, interreligious relations and attitudes, and social theology
- 244 Doctrines and practices
- 245 Religious ethics
- 246 Leaders and organization
- 247 Missions and religious education
- 248 Sources
- 249 Branches, sects, reform movements

Below the three-digit level, topics may be added through application of standard subdivisions, existing schedule notation, or notation synthesized from add instructions. As an example of the last, 243 can be extended by the instructions found under standard notation 294.33:

Add to base number 294.33 the numbers following 201 in 201.3–201.7, e.g., social theology 294.337

In our UDC base 24 + DDC notation, social theology of Buddhism is represented by 243.7. The corresponding full UDC notation for the same topic is 24-43.

The use of the UDC base number plus Dewey notation moves Buddhism from a placement in “other religions” in 290 to a neutral chronological/regional position based on the sequence found in UDC Class 2. DDC number-building instructions and internal and auxiliary tables are maintained. The result is similar in approach to the current Option B in the DDC, except that it provides a redistribution of all religions instead of giving prominent treatment to a single religion.

There are limited benefits to this approach. The resulting notation does not correspond to the UDC beyond the first two digits. Also, the development itself carries over the limited development of Buddhism found in the current development of 294.3 in the DDC.

3.3 Detailed mapping of DDC Class 294.3 to UDC Class 24

The second approach under study is to adopt the UDC structure in full as the basis for an optional arrangement of religion in the DDC. We decided as a first step to explore the issues arising from a detailed mapping of 294.3 to UDC Class 24. For the initial study, we limited our source mapping data to the 294.3 notation explicitly enumerated in the current editorial database for the full edition of the DDC.

The Dewey editorial database currently contains eighty-six entries in the development for 294.3 Buddhism: twenty-nine schedule entries, plus fifty-seven synthesized index-only entries. Additional numbers may be built using standard subdivisions or add instructions in 294.3. The UDC database contains over 260 explicit entries for Class 24: the table outline of thirteen entries for Buddhism expanded through application of the general religion auxiliary table plus some entries specific to Buddhism. We extracted the developments for Buddhism from the two systems, and developed a table of correspondence from the Dewey notation to the UDC notation. An excerpt based on Dewey classes 294.33 and 294.39 is included in Table 2.

Table 2: DDC-UDC mapping

DDC	UDC
294.333 Mythology	24-264 Myths and legends
294.337 Social theology	24-43 Social customs and practice. Social theology
294.391 Theravada Buddhism	241 Hinayana (Theravada) Buddhism
294.392 Mahayana Buddhism	242 Mahayana Buddhism
294.3923 Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism)	243 Lamaism
294.3923 Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism)	243.4 Tibetan Buddhism
294.3925 Tantric Buddhism	243.2 Tantrayana. Tantric Buddhism
294.3925 Tantric Buddhism	243.6 Vajrayana (= Tantric aspect of Mahayana)
294.3926 Pure Land sects	242.5-795.2 Pure Land
294.3927 Zen (Ch'an)	242.5-795.4 Ch'an
294.3927 Zen (Ch'an)	244.82 Zen Buddhism
294.3928 Nichiren Shoshu and Sōka Gakkai	244 Japanese Buddhism

The excerpt in Table 2 highlights some of the differences in structure and class definitions between the two systems. UDC makes a basic distinction between Chinese Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism; Dewey does not make such a distinction. For example, UDC places Ch'an under Chinese Buddhism and Zen Buddhism under Japanese Buddhism; Dewey groups both in a single category. The DDC category 294.3926 Pure Land sects includes Pure Land sects of Chinese and Japanese origin. The UDC database only specifies explicit notation for the Chinese version (242.5-795.2), but the same notation can be added to Japanese Buddhism to represent the Japanese version of the sect. Nichiren Shoshu is a sect in Japanese Buddhism, and Sōka Gakkai is its corresponding lay organization. UDC includes general provisions for sects and lay organizations in the main religion auxiliary table, but the Buddhism expansion in the UDC database does not include explicit notation for either concept. Lamaism and Tibetan Buddhism are equivalent concepts and treated as such in the DDC; in the UDC, Tibetan Buddhism is represented as a subdivision of Lamaism, and this should probably be revised. Tantric Buddhism is a subdivision of Mahayana in the DDC; the boundaries of UDC classes 243.2 and 243.6 are not immediately obvious.

Table 3 contains the Dewey notation from 294.33 for which we did not find a match beyond Buddhism itself in the UDC database. In Dewey, there is a skeletal development for secular disciplines under 201.7, with direct addition from other schedules limited to specific social problems. The UDC does not specify combinations of religions and other disciplines explicitly in Class 2, but such classes are available through synthesis.

Table 3: DDC numbers without UDC equivalents in Class 24

294.33	Religious mythology, interreligious relations and attitudes, and social theology
294.335	Buddhism and Islam
294.336	Religion and secular disciplines–Buddhism
294.3365	Science and religion–Buddhism
294.3367	Arts and religion–Buddhism
294.3372	Civil war–social theology–Buddhism
294.33723	Civil rights–social theology–Buddhism
294.33727	International relations–social theology–Buddhism
294.337273	Conscientious objection–social theology–Buddhism
294.3376	Social problems–social theology–Buddhism
294.337625	Poor people–social theology–Buddhism

Other issues surfaced as we reviewed mappings from the rest of the Dewey entries in 294.3 to notation in UDC Class 24. In addition to level of development and enumeration/synthesis of topics, there are differences in the common auxiliary tables outside of religion. In Dewey, there are six auxiliary tables, Tables 1-6. The two tables which occur in UDC but are not reflected in DDC are UDC's Table 1k-05 Common auxiliaries of persons, which is far more detailed than the provisions for persons in DDC's Table 1 -08, and UDC's Table 1k-02 Common auxiliaries of common properties, which has no comparable table in DDC. UDC also has Table 1k-04 Common auxiliaries of relations, processes and operations, but this post-dates the creation of Class 2, and should not affect the exercise. It is DDC Tables 1, 2, 5 and 6 that would be principally used and a few expansions may be needed, especially for languages and common forms to accommodate the concepts spelled out in the UDC.

4. Next steps

Based on our preliminary study, we have identified a number of areas for additional study at the content and representational levels. At the content level, we have decided to focus on a careful study of branches, denominations, and sects below the main faith level. We suspect that the differences highlighted in the study of Buddhism are replicated throughout the two systems, and may point to areas in both systems in which further editorial work is needed. We believe a closer alignment of branches, denominations, and sects in the two schemes will contribute toward interoperability.

At the representational level, we considered and rejected a development using the UDC base number plus existing DDC notation. We are currently studying an approach that uses the UDC main number coupled with revised DDC notation. In order to provide a basis for a revised development and to promote future interoperability, we need to undertake more detailed mappings between the religion schemes in the two systems. Because of the fully faceted nature of the UDC schedule and the differences in the two systems' main religion auxiliary table and common auxiliaries, we do not think it is possible to map precoordinated notation. We plan to focus our efforts on developing mappings at the facet level for topics within the religion schemes in both systems. We will then investigate using the mappings as a guide to developing 200 Religion based on the UDC scheme, but with standard Dewey notation.

For example, UDC has more detailed provisions for rites and ceremonies in the main religion auxiliary table than those found in the corresponding DDC development in 201–209 Specific aspects of religion. A topic such as "Buddhist sprinkling rites" is classed in a number corresponding to the general topic "Buddhist rites" in the DDC; in the UDC, the topic is fully represented:

DDC: 294.3438
 294.3 Buddhism
 294.343 Public worship and other practices
 8 Rites (notation derived from 203.8 Rites and ceremonies)

UDC: 24-536.1
 24 Buddhism
 536 Physical rites and ceremonies
 536.1 Washing. Ablution. Immersion in water. Sprinkling of water.

We can use this example to develop the general table in Dewey under 203.8. At the same time, we will also want to provide for full addition of the 201–209 development (with appropriate extensions specific to Buddhism) directly to the base numbers for Buddhism itself and for branches, sects, and movements.

5. Summary

The general chronological/regional approach taken by UDC in its revision of Class 2 Religion and Theology offers a promising model for an alternative view of religion in the DDC, and a possible framework for a future revision of 200 Religion. Our preliminary study supports the development of a browsing view of religion based on the UDC development at the major faith level. We have used Buddhism as a case study to outline some of the problems in developing detailed mappings between the two religion schemes. In the course of studying mappings at a detailed level, we uncovered structural differences and inconsistencies in both systems that must be addressed. The process of mapping concepts will lead to improvements in both systems as well as providing links for interoperability. Our immediate efforts in this ongoing study will be focused on a review of branches, denominations, and sects below the major faith level in both systems, and on the development of mappings at the facet level.

Notes

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