
Universal Decimal Classification : a Unique Scheme with its Origin, Development and Credibility**Hirak Roychaudhuri**P.O- Basirhat , Vill-Sainpala,
S.N Majumder Road, Dist-North 24 Parganas ,
Pin Code No.-743411.State-West Bengal

Abstract: *This article deals with the emergence, background history and usages of the Universal Decimal Classification scheme (UDC). It also speaks about the influence of the very scheme over different languages in different countries. It focuses also on the scheme's acceptability and flexibility to the universal users. This article discusses the scheme's inclination to be transformed into a machine readable version to compete with other schemes full-fledgedly. Here, the significance of classification scheme in a multilingual atmosphere is highlighted and future advancements delineated.*

Keywords: *Universal Decimal Classification, Common Auxiliaries, Master Reference File, FID, Dewey Decimal Classification, Special Auxiliaries.*

Emergence of the scheme: It was towards the end of the last century, a Belgian lawyer Paul Otlet, jointly with a fellow countryman and colleague, Henry LaFontaine, got on the task of compiling a bibliography of the whole lot that had come out in print version, a *Re'pertoire Universel Bibliographique*. To offer an orderly arrangement they negotiated the agreement of Melvil Dewey, particularly with the fifth edition of Dewey Decimal Classification (Comaromi, 1976). Primarily, the purpose was a bibliographic supply for lawyers, and the social sciences were undertaken first, but very soon the project was swelled in an attempt to grip the whole of knowledge in their inventory. Its French-language origins have a great contributing factor as the scheme has been popular in the French-speaking countries of North Africa, Latin America, in Spain and all through Eastern Europe. In the specialist libraries of English speaking world its demand is obviously amazing.

Connection with Dewey Decimal Classification: Otlet and LaFontaine widened the scheme resorting on Dewey's ideas and so constructed the system that was originally referred to as the "Brussels expansion". It was so called because the body set up by Otlet to commence this bibliographic project, the Institute International de Bibliographie (IIB), was the result of a conference of bibliographers held at Brussels in 1895. The first edition of this classification was completed and published in 1907. Actually Dewey himself and his son Godfrey, as well as his assistant Dorcas Fellows, remained in close contact with Otlet. Though Dewey and his son wanted to remain the bond intact with Otlet but it was Miss Fellows whose influence forced the two schemes to be swerved on separate ways by the 1930s (Comaromi 1976).

Some Important notes on IIB: IIB was rechanged as International Institute for Documentation in 1914; International Federation for Documentation in 1958; and International Federation of Information and Documentation (FID) in 1986.

Roles of Duyvis, Lloyd and Strachan: Duyvis was employed as full-time editor of this classification scheme, and stayed in that office from 1929-1959. The accountability of developing

the scheme remained essentially in the control of Duyvis(Donker Duyvis) throughout a period of thirty years. In 1963, Geoffrey Lloyd, who was at that time the editor of the English edition of the UDC, was appointed editor of the classification scheme, and he enforced a more thorough procedure for revisions of different editions. Throughout the periods of Duyvis and Lloyd different editions of the scheme were emerged(i.e French edition, German edition{Dezimal Klassifikation},English edition etc).Lloyd remained editor until his retirement in 1975,by which time the scheme which had a central classification committee had 25 members and the scheme had been published in twenty two languages(Strachan,1990).On Lloyd's retirement,David Strachan, one of Lloyd's assistants became the technical director of UDC Directorate. A management group was also set up in 1948.The management group's proposal for the future organization of the UDC management and revision structures(Gilchrist,1984)was approved by the council of FID at the Montreal Conference in 1986.Later,for the benefit of the scheme a management board and five revision committees were set up instead of Central Classification Committee.

Different editions of UDC: Growth of the UDC has been separated into the following three historical periods by Reyward: French Period: Foundation and grammar (1895-1933), German Period: Details and expansion (1933-1952) English Period: Research and practice (1936-1975), International Period: Technical and organisational improvement(1990onwards-)(Reyward,1978).Till 1990, there were full, medium, and abridged editions. Full edition covered 2,00,000 terms, medium had 60,000 terms (about 30 per cent of the full) and abridged comprised up to 20,000 terms (about 10 per cent of the full edition). In adding up to the earlier available full, medium and abridged editions, abridged and pocket editions in French, English, and Spanish were published in 1998, 1999, and 2004, respectively. This layout was subsequently published in other languages (like Russian and Croatian) also. Now, only standard printed version of 67,000 terms, the pocket version (also published as 'abridged') of 4100 classes and the Spanish edition of 20,000 are formally available. A new English pocket edition is ongoing by the British Standards Institution (BSI), while a multilingual pocket edition to be made public by the UDC Consortium is also being.

A standard version of the UDC, containing 67,000 classes, is continued by the UDC Consortium and is existing in a database format. It is named the UDC Master Reference File (UDC-MRF). Currently, the main language of UDC-MRF is English, though 31,000 records are also obtainable in German. The UDC Consortium has plans to introduce a German translation , and translation in other languages such as Spanish, French, or Russian also. UDC MRF database was created in 1993 in CDS/ISIS software. Since then, UDC database exports (in ISO 2709), and simple text exports have been distributed to the users in a file format. The UDC Consortium does not issue or share out the UDC-MRF in printed format. The printed format as well as CD-ROM or Web editions come up to only as products from different publishers who are either members of the UDC consortium or pay-publishing license(Satija,2008).

Common Auxiliary Tables :

More than 10,000 common auxiliaries are given in Tables 1a to 1k: Relations, addition, coordination + / [] ::, Languages =0/9, Forms(0/09), Places(1/9), Ethnic grouping(=...),Time” “,Non-UDC numbers * and A/Z, General characteristics -0, Properties -02, Materials -03,relations,processes,operations,etc: -04, Persons and personal characteristics -05.These

auxiliaries can be added to a number of any specificity without any exact instruction.e.g.61-051 Medical Personnel,645.4-035.3 Wooden Furniture etc.Two or more auxiliaries can be added simultaneously e.g: Weather on X-Mas of 2007 in India: A report 51.5”2007.12.25”(540)(047).

Special Auxiliaries: The special auxiliaries are Hyphen auxiliaries,zero auxiliaries and Apostrophe e.g Dialects of written Spanish in South America 811.134-26’282(8).

Citation Order: In case of citation order the order of facets in the class number is reverse of their arrangement on the shelves. A broader order is: Class number +Special auxiliaries + Common auxiliaries. The common auxiliaries are to be added in the order of their lessening specificity, i.e., more important or specific common auxiliaries are to be added first and the least specific to be added very last. A mechanical formula for the citation order is that the auxiliary tables should be added in the order 1k to 1c.

Notation:

There are different types of mixed notations in UDC .They are as follows ⇒ Arrow (See Also), ◇ Diamond (Examples numbers combinations), [] Square(Inclusion note ,it reads Including”), | Sideline (Special auxiliaries) ,# Hash (Non-UDC extensions) and A/Z Alphabets (Alphabetical divisions).

Index: In the index of the abridged edition there are 9500 main and 3500 subentries making a sum of 13,000 entries restricted in 107 pages. It gives an average of three access points per entry in the tables. Index entries gathered from the electronic files are organized in word-by-word order to obey the rules of the BS ISO 999 Standard. Specific names are entered following AACR 2 condition. It includes all the principal divisions, inclusion notes, common and special auxiliaries and built-in compound numbers.(Satija,2008).

Problems: Basic problems are as following(i) Some notational devices, although apparently sound and pleasing, cause problems in searching and browsing. e.g., symbols like – and 0 overlap in function and may lead to confusion.

(ii)Main class 4 has still not been filled up.

(iii) Its auxiliaries are still developing with changes in some notational symbols.

(iv) There are certain citation order problems, as no definite standard has been approved.

(V) Besides there are problems of parallel subdivisions.

Revision: The UDC revision is premeditated and regular. The UDCC manages its development acting as an international clearing house. It asks for help from specialists in many subject fields. Normally revision proposals are published in the Extensions and Corrections to the UDC and remarks and proposals are asked from users and the members of the Advisory Board before finally being fit in the UCD-MRF (McIlwaine, 1994).

What is the scheme’s future?: For a century, despite not having adequate money and manpower, it has kept its head above waters. It is coping with updating by restructuring the knowledge using the frame work of the Bibliographic Classification. At the UDC Seminar

(www.ulcc.org/seminar2007.htm) in June 2007 at the UDCC Headquarter, a Dutch software company Magnaview (www.magnaview.nl) presented an inventive visual application of the UDC, which makes feasible to view the UDC MRF in 20 fresh ways with capacity to relate visually. The software is commercially accessible from the company for the MRF license holders. With its well organised promotional network and ardor for innovations the UDC seems only to have guaranteed great expectations. One important information about the present use of UDC may be mentioned that it is used as the structure for the subject trees of the BUBUL bulletin board (Bulletin Board for Librarians) and for other CAS services obtainable over the internet, either locally or internationally (Buxton, 1993).

Acknowledgements : Major information are taken from the articles of Satija and McIlwaine. Examples are collected from International Medium Edition: English Text, Universal Decimal Classification (1993) and other editions.

References :

- Buxton, A. B. (1993). *Computer searching on UDC numbers. Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, 52, 132–151.
- Comaromi, J. P. (1976). *The eighteen editions of the Dewey Decimal Classification*. Albany, NY: Forest Press Division, Lake Placid Educational Foundation.
- Gilchrist, A. (1984). *Proposal for the future organisation of the UDC management and revision structures*. The Hague: FID. Unpublished report.
- McIlwaine, I. C. (1994). *The Universal Decimal Classification: Some factors concerning its origins, development, and influence*. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 48(4), 331-339.
- McIlwaine, I. C. (1994). *Report of the editor in chief. Extensions and corrections to the UDC*, 16, 9-18.
- Rayward, W. B. (1978). *The universe of information: The work of Paul Otlet for documentation and international organization (FID 520)*. Moscow: VINITI.
- Satija, M. P. (2008). *Universal Decimal Classification: Past and present*. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 28(6), 3-10.
- Strachan, P. D. (1990). *UDC revision work in FID*. In A. Gilchrist & D. Strachan (Eds.), *The UDC : Essays for a new decade (pp. 1-10)*. London: Aslib.
- Universal Decimal Classification: International medium Edition. English text (2nd ed.)*. (1993). (BS 1000M.) London: BSI Standards. (1st suppl. published 1995).