Libraries change over
Congress system replacing Dewey

by Allan Green

The old Dewey Decimal System for the classification of books, long the standard throughout the world, has now been replaced at MIT, where the Library of Congress (LC) classification, the system that is used at MIT, is being adopted. The MIT Libraries had developed, in 1963, a system known as the MIT system, which was created in response to the Dewey system and was designed to be more flexible and accommodating. As a result, it was decided in 1963 to switch to the LC system. As a result, the Dewey system is slowly being replaced by the LC system, which is the standard cataloguing system for most of the country's libraries. However, the Dewey system is still used at MIT, and the transition will take some time. The LC system is expected to be fully adopted by MIT libraries in the near future.

The Dewey system is based on a decimal system, where books are classified according to their subject matter. The LC system, on the other hand, is based on a classification scheme that is more flexible and accommodating. The LC system also has a larger provision for the cross-relation of knowledge, which makes it easier to insert new sections or to adjust notation as the need arises. Under the name of each classification schedule and subject headings, the arbitrary alphanumeric arrangement of books makes it a simple matter to include new fields and topics. Further, since LC is the National classification system, it can be used more economically than any local schedule. The Library of Congress, for example, issues catalog cards for new books printed in the country; these can be incorporated directly into the MIT cataloging system.

The LC system is constantly being updated as the need arises. The system has the twin advantages of being more flexible and accommodating, as well as being more efficient in terms of how books are organized and catalogued. Overall, the transition to the LC system is expected to be a smooth one, and the MIT Libraries are working to ensure that the transition is as seamless as possible.