

Acquisition and Bibliographic Services
Jonny Edvardsen, head of department
jonny.edvardsen@nb.no
+4723271145

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OCLC – Online Computer Library Center
6565 Kilgour Place
Dublin, Ohio 43017
USA

DDC in Norway and at the National Library of Norway

In Norway, libraries have been using the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) to systematize and provide end-user access to their collections for over 100 years. Since 1956, it has been the only persistent means of subject access to the Norwegian National Bibliography, which includes more than half a million books, periodicals and journal articles in Bokmål and Nynorsk (the two official written forms of the Norwegian language) and in Sami. Additionally, various editions of the DDC have been used to classify the collections of every public library in Norway (totaling 428), most school libraries (including the libraries of approximately 430 high schools) and at least 85 university and research libraries (including the libraries of four of the five largest universities in Norway).

Its undeniable pervasiveness as a common subject access point across library collections within Norway has led the National Library of Norway to recognize the vast potential of the DDC for use in search and discovery. Over the past five years, it has therefore invested an appreciable amount of resources into the translation and development of the classification tool Norsk WebDewey and the end-user discovery tool Norsk WebDewey Search, both to be launched in the fall of 2015.

With Norsk WebDewey, classifiers at the National Library, Biblioteksentralen (the main supplier of bibliographic metadata to public libraries) and university and research libraries across Norway will have a common tool with which to create and share DDC-numbers and classification practices. It will also enable the reuse of classification codes from other countries using the 23rd edition of the DDC, most notably Sweden, England and the U.S.

Norsk WebDewey Search and use of the Norsk WebDewey Search API will give end-users in Norwegian libraries access to DDC-classified materials with the use of word queries, regardless of which language the materials are written in or where the materials are located. Furthermore, it will allow them to search and browse digital and physical collections from digital platforms in ways previously unrealizable.

There are no national subject headings in Norway, so the DDC is the only common subject descriptor for the majority of Norwegian libraries. Therefore, a number of library institutions have begun the arduous task of mapping local subject headings

and thesauri to the Norwegian DDC with the conviction that the DDC can be leveraged as a switching hub for subject browse and discovery across collections.

Similar mapping projects are under way internationally and a large number of these vocabularies have been published as open data sets in the form of Linked Data. The National Library of Norway is currently investigating means to publish Norwegian bibliographic metadata on the Semantic Web and it is crucial that dewey.info plays a key role in subject access from this platform as well.

- As the National Library of Norway, we want to provide as many Norwegian libraries as possible with Norsk WebDewey so that the DDC can be used interoperably by classifiers and end-users across collections
- As translators of the DDC to Norwegian, we want an OCLC Dewey editor responsible for the coordination of translations so that we are ensured easy and consistent communication with OCLC and other translation teams regarding translation issues
- As managers of Norsk WebDewey, we want better control of relative index terms so that user generated content complies with preferred terms in the relative index
- As classifiers using Norsk WebDewey, we want regular updates to the DDC and notifications thereof so that we are ensured a tool with up-to-date knowledge representation
- As classifiers using Norsk WebDewey, we want a stable and fully functioning number building module so that we more easily can share and reuse classification work
- As mappers of local subject vocabularies to the Norwegian DDC, we want access to DDC metadata and notifications of updates so that we can more easily map and maintain our mappings
- As developers of search and discovery tools in Norwegian libraries, we want open and stable access to DDC captions, relative index terms, hierarchical information and number component data so that we can provide subject access to DDC-classified collections with word queries, through hierarchical browsing and through facets of built numbers
- As end-users in Norwegian libraries, we want to be able to locate and discover library materials across collections without prerequisite knowledge of the DDC so that we can find what we need as effortlessly as possible

The National Library of Norway regards the DDC as a unique international standard in knowledge organization. With this letter, we hope to persuade the OCLC to continue to manage it as such.



JONNY EDVARDSEN
Head of Department for Acquisition and Bibliographic Services