Approximating the whole: BL triggers for querying the rule

- Classifiers consistently find the rule to be the most challenging aspect of learning and applying the DDC, and users can be confused by its results

- The official instructions addressing the rule and its many exceptions are scattered across the *Introduction*, *Glossary* and the *Manual*, while the logic is not fully explained and must be pieced together

- There are many grey areas of application where subject knowledge can be key, especially in relation to concepts

- Accordingly, many unreliable precedents are to be found across even the most trusted online catalogues

- Meanwhile, with modern means of information retrieval, the additional loss of specificity engendered by the rule means that unexpressed facets are a greater loss than ever before

Approximating the whole: Rule logic

- To create standing room at general points in schedules so future expansions can be made without immediate need to reclassify stock affected by those changes

- Works on specific topics in a subject therefore class with general works and precede broader topics with their own numbers, but standing room is consistently located

- When the rule is waived, such specific material is usually not solely located at a general number but scattered throughout a class (and so along the shelf)

- To add subdivisions/standard subdivisions for a work that does not approximate the whole is/would be to add on to an unexpressed stage in the hierarchy

- The correct application of the rule ensures that any resulting synthesis remains 'pure'

Approximating the whole:
Black widow spiders in California 595.44

595   ***Arthropoda**

595.4   ***Chelicerata**

595.44   ***Araneida**

Variant name: Araneae

Class here spiders

[Latrodectus genus, including Black widow species = in standing room at this number]

* Add as instructed under 592-599

Approximating the whole – or not!

Processing hardwoods in Canada   **674.1420971**

BUT **Processing** *elm* **in Canada**   **674.142**

Periodical on traditional jazz   **781.65305**

BUT **Periodical on** *Dixieland* **jazz**   **781.653**

British steam locomotives   **625.2610941**

BUT **LNER steam locomotives**   **625.261**

Approximating the whole: Disadvantages

- Fewer facets for a work may be expressed in DDC numbers than would otherwise be the case: the rule adversely affects retrieval

- Unexpressed facets are a greater loss than ever before re automated retrieval and any advances in contextual searching

- Interfiling specific works in standing room with general ones at the same number runs contrary to the overall schedule arrangement from the general to the particular: the rule adversely affects browsing

- Some scatter already due to instructions to waive the rule throughout the scheme: the rule fosters an inconsistent approach to specificity

- *Crucially*, classifiers lacking useful subject knowledge can *mis*classify