

The SSS: a Simple, Secure Solution for Handling Compact Discs While Retaining the Ability to Browse Jewel Cases by Library of Congress Classification Numbers

Scenario

Our music compact discs are organized by Library of Congress classification numbers. The empty CD cases are placed in public shelving to facilitate browsing by library users. The discs are removed from the jewel cases and kept in storage envelopes in a secure location behind the circulation desk.

Problem

Because of the similarity of LC classification numbers for music recordings, circulation workers would frequently make mistakes when placing discs in jewel cases for check out, or when replacing the discs in the storage sleeves when items were returned. Library users frequently left the library with discs that did not belong in the jewel cases they had selected.

Solution

We looked for a solution based on three assumptions:

- Compact discs would continue to be classified with LC call numbers
- Jewel cases would be kept on public shelves so patrons could browse them
- Compact discs themselves would be placed in sleeves and shelved behind the Circulation Desk for security reasons

We decided to assign an accession number to each disc. This number was written on the disc, jewel case, and storage sleeve. We continued to shelve the jewel cases by LC classification number. The discs and storage sleeves were then shelved behind the Circulation Desk in numerical rather than classification number order. Since Circulation student workers now only have to deal with the accession number, mistakes have been almost completely eliminated! It also takes a lot less time to match discs and cases—an added benefit.

How we did it

1. The accession number is assigned when the compact disc is cataloged. It is written on the processing slip, and entered into the library record for the item. (This number is not displayed as part of the bibliographic record.) We assign numbers based on how many CDs each drawer in our case holds. Since each drawer holds about 600 compact discs, we number them A-1 through A-600, B-1 through B-600, etc. We also have separate drawers for smaller collections, such as Curriculum Center compact discs.
2. When the compact disc is processed, the accession number is written on the clear plastic near the center of the disc. We use a fine point permanent marker, and we do not write on any part of the recordable surface.
3. The number is also written on the labels that are affixed to the storage sleeves and the jewel cases.

4. The sleeves are filed in the storage cabinets behind the Circulation Desk in accession number, rather than classification number, order.
5. The jewel cases are still shelved in call number order.
6. When a library user brings a jewel case to the desk, the Circulation staff opens the jewel case, notes the accession number, finds that number in the storage cases, inserts the CD in the jewel case, and checks it out to the user.
7. When the item is returned, the case is checked to ensure that it includes the correct compact disc. It is then discharged, the disc is removed and returned to the storage sleeve, and the jewel case is reshelfed in the public shelves.

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