

100+ Years: Library of Congress Control Number (LCCN)

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What is it for?

- ❖ **The bibliographic metadata record**
 - which describes a resource
- ❖ **Often printed on resource**
 - therefore associated also with the actual resource
- ❖ **Over 20 million LCCNs**

LCCN History and transformations

1898 – 1901:

Library of Congress Card Number

❖ Experiments with numbering

- Month + day + year + serial number
 - Aug. 24 1998 – 67
 - 12 – 1900 – 245
- Year + country of publication + serial number
 - 1 – F – 172
- Year + form of item + serial number
 - 1 – Map – 50
- Year + LCC class + serial number
 - 1 – Z – 245

1902 – 1969:

Library of Congress Card Number

❖ Stable pattern established

- Alpha prefix + 2 digit year + up to 6 digit serial number

- Prefix for cataloging partners
 - Agr 33 – 1030 [Department of Agriculture, 1902-1940]
 - S 14 – 268 [Smithsonian Institution, 1913-1950]

- Prefix for form of material
 - MIC 52 – 4459 [Microfilm, cataloged by LC 1949-1965]
 - R 59 – 3789 [Phonograph records cataloged by LC 1953-1972]

- Prefix for projects/programs
 - TB 63 – 9950 [Talking book Program]

1970 – 2000:

Library of Congress Control Number

- ❖ Catalog cards became machine-readable catalog records
- ❖ Length of number fixed at 12 positions
 - Up to 3 character alpha prefix + 2 digit year + 6 digit serial number + 1 character supplement number = 12 characters
 - n##79005195# (# = blank)
 - ###85153773#
- ❖ Slowly dropped alphabetic prefixes
- ❖ Supplement position always blank

2001 – today: LCCN

- ❖ 100 years since 2002!
- ❖ 2 digit year no longer works
 - 02 = 1902 or 2002?
- ❖ New configuration
 - Up to 2 character alpha prefix + 4 digit year + 6 digit serial number) = 12 characters
 - ##2001627090
 - nb2006005293
- ❖ Used one character from alpha prefix and the supplement number to make 4 digit year
- ❖ Few alpha prefixes still used

Assignment

- ❖ **Generally assignment was centralized – at the Library of Congress**
- ❖ **Alpha prefixes used for uniqueness when distributed assignment**
- ❖ **Occasional use of blocks for distributed assignment**
 - **Cataloging in Publication Program**
 - **Complementary numbers**

How is it used?

- ❖ Originally, for obtaining catalog cards
- ❖ For finding metadata records
- ❖ For searching for resources

- ❖ In the web world, in URLs
 - To access a bibliographic record in the Library of Congress Linked Data Service
 - <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/nr97026911>
 - To access a bibliographic record in the Library of Congress catalogs via a Permalink
 - <http://lccn.loc.gov/99209023>

Fundamentals of longevity for LCCN

- ❖ **Simplicity**
- ❖ **Used year to start new numbering**
- ❖ **Used serial numbers with no intelligence**
- ❖ **Used intelligent alphabetic prefixes sparingly to enable distributed assignment**
- ❖ **Identifier for stable metadata**
- ❖ **Stability of assigning agency, Library of Congress**
- ❖ **110 years in 2012**

Thanks