

Most libraries today use a card system on which to display information about a book and create an index to their collections which allows public access. Various systems exist but most card catalogues use cards of about 3" x 5" printed on medium weight card stock. International specifications for size and stock exist but these are not always followed.

Essentially, a card in a card catalogue describes a book, providing sufficient information for the user to decide on its subject and lead him to its location on the shelf (if in an open-access library). To do this, a standard catalogue card consists of four basic elements.

a. Classification Number. This is a numeric, alphabetic or alpha-numeric code, usually placed in the upper left hand corner of the card which represents the number which has been assigned to a book based on whatever classification scheme the library uses. There is no universally used classification scheme. Libraries may even invent their own classification schemes rather than using one of the numerous schemes which are available.

b. The main Entry. This is perhaps, from the cataloguer's point of view, the most important element on the catalogue card. The main entry is the established form of