

Filing rules

From Professionaltips

Contents

- 1 About Filing
- 2 Publications on Filing
 - 2.1 From ALA
 - 2.2 From LC
 - 2.3 Other
- 3 Rules for Individual Libraries

About Filing

There are two main versions of filing rules: letter-by-letter and word-by-word.

Professor Michael Buckland of SIMS prepared the handout, [Common U.S. Filing Rules \(PDF\)](#), which shows brief examples of both.

For most libraries, filing rules are embedded in the software driving the local automated system. However, the principles of filing may also be used for shelving books.

An example will show the main difference:

In the ALA Rules for Filing Catalog Cards, 2nd ed., names beginning with M', Mc, and Mac were all filed as if spelled Mac.

MacDonald, David

McDonald, Ronald

McDonegan, Cecelia

MacDonegan, Steven

In the ALA Filing Rules, names beginning with M', Mc, and Mac are filed alphabetically as spelled.

MacDonald, David

MacDonegan, Steven

McDonald, Ronald

McDonegan, Cecelia

Publications on Filing

From ALA

The American Library Association maintains in print the following books which have examples of each type of filing rules; these can both still be purchased from the ALA Online Store.

ALA Filing Rules, prepared by the RTSD Filing Committee in 1980, presents rules for the arrangement of bibliographic records whether displayed in card, book, or online format. It is an example of **letter-by-letter filing**. These rules also largely ignore distinctions among different punctuation marks and do not distinguish among the types of access points.

ALA Rules for Filing Catalog Cards, 2nd Edition, by Pauline A. Seeley, is the classic guide to filing catalog cards using the basic order of alphabetical, **word-by-word filing**.

From LC

Library of Congress Filing Rules, now part of the Cataloger's Desktop. These, also first published in 1980, retain traditional groupings of access points by type.

Other

Establishing Alphabetic, Numeric and Subject Filing Systems, by ARMA International Standards Task Force (ANSI/ARMA 12-2005) Publisher's description: "This standard is intended to aid in the selection and application of a filing system that will enable users to retrieve information when needed. It describes three principal systems: alphabetic filing, subject filing, and numeric filing. In addition, it contains standard rules for indexing alphabetic data. This standard will establish a uniform files classification system that makes sense to the users while identifying and preserving a set order of records. Three informative appendices include instructions for indexing, factors to consider when using automated indexing systems, and exceptions for alphabetic indexing."

Guidelines for Alphabetical Arrangement of Letters and Sorting of Numerals and Other Symbols, by Hans H. Wellisch. (Bethesda, Md.: NISO Press, 1999. (PDF document) Abstract (from NISO): "This technical report provides rules for the alphabetical arrangement of headings in lists of all kinds, such as bibliographies, indexes, dictionaries, directories, inventories, etc. It also covers the sorting of Arabic or Roman numbers, and other symbols. It consists of seven rules that cover problems which may arise in alphanumeric arrangement of headings. The technical report is based on the traditional order of letters in the English alphabet and that of numerals in ascending arithmetical order. It does not address issues concerning meaning or type of headings. The rules can generally be applied by human beings as well as by computers. Each rule is followed by illustrative examples."

Rules for Individual Libraries

Some libraries have posted brief rules covering the main situations on their home pages for the benefit of library users. These would apply to those libraries specifically and may not be exactly as in use at your library.

Princeton University Library

School District of Philadelphia

Retrieved from "http://wikis.ala.org/professionaltips/index.php/Filing_rules"

Categories: [Cataloging and Classification](#) | [Collection Development, Organization, and Services](#)

- This page was last modified 23:07, 22 July 2009.
- This page has been accessed 22,389 times.
- [Privacy policy](#)
- [About Professionaltips](#)
- [Disclaimers](#)

