

# Utility or Futility?: Revisiting Smith's Vexillological Classification System

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**Abstract** In 1982, Whitney Smith published his Vexillological Classification System (VCS), “for ordering knowledge in the field of flag history and symbolism.” It was used by Smith to organize the Flag Research Center’s collection and to index *The Flag Bulletin*. Smith articulated the need for the “systematic organization of existing material” to enable vexillologists and others working in the field to analyze flag information and produce necessary scholarship. He expressed doubts the system would prove “widely acceptable” or “adequate” and invited its analysis for shortcomings and improvements—even if those improvements required a new classification system. To date, it does not appear that any vexillologist has taken up Smith’s challenge. This paper does that. First, I briefly examine classification itself and its usefulness to scholars. I then examine vexillological classification systems prior to the VCS and the VCS itself, while discussing possible reasons why it has not been widely adopted. Then, I briefly compare the Library of Congress Classification with the VCS to identify the relative utility of each for use by vexillologists, including the value of a separate system for vexillology. Finally, I recommend improvements that may be made to the VCS by comparing it briefly to the economic literature classification system to address identified shortcomings that will encourage its modification by vexillologists and thus realize Smith’s goal of aiding productive scholarship.

## 1. Introduction

“The very manner in which facts are organized tends to encourage or discourage the comprehension of those facts and their relationship to the universe as a whole” (Smith, VCS 16). Whitney Smith developed his universal Vexillological Classification System to address an age-old issue faced by scholars: how to meaningfully organize one’s material so that it is easily retrievable for later use. “[D]ata collection from observation, experimentation, and other forms of research is of limited usefulness if the results are not systematically organized for storage, transmission, and —perhaps most importantly— analysis” (Smith, VCS 16). Used in conjunction with other bibliographic tools, a classification system enables scholars and researchers to recognize other relevant material that cannot be specified or known to exist when undertaking the research” (Mann 15). Because “classification can also serve to show relationships between subjects,” classification systems are especially helpful in aiding the research in interdisciplinary work (Curley 147-148). That is, “the scholar finds [classification] indispensable: articles and books cannot be undertaken, cross-cultural analyses cannot be undertaken, and the assault on unexplored territory cannot be made without the prior systematic organization of existing material” (Smith, VCS 17).



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## A | Basics of Classification

"From the standpoint of anyone who collects information, there is a basic need to be able to find material obtained in the past and to add new material to it" (Smith, VCS 17). Classification systems were initially developed to "arrange printed books in topical or disciplinary categories (i.e., to position volumes treating the same or similar subjects next to one another)" in a library or other holding institution to permit retrieval by researchers and patrons (Mann 15). They now include all information.

*Information* refers to any recorded information, regardless of physical form, and an *information package* is "an organizable unit of information" (Taylor, *Organization of Information* 3). In practice, a classification system is "[a]n organized framework for the systematic organization of knowledge," organized by subject, and used to appropriately place an information package within the system's hierarchy by assigning a classification notation (Taylor, *Cataloging & Classification* 529). A *classification notation* is "[a] set of symbols (usually [letters,] arabic numerals, roman numerals, or any other set with a self-evident order) used to express the subject content of an item and indicate its conceptual and physical location in the holding institution's collection (Comaromi 9). *Subject headings* are the words or phrases assigned to an information package to describe it (Taylor, *Cataloging & Classification* 545). A master list of subject headings used in a classification system is a *controlled vocabulary* or a *thesaurus* (Taylor, *Cataloging & Classification* 531, 545, 546). While an information package ordinarily has only one classification notation, it may have more than one subject heading that analyzes the diversity of its intellectual content.

The two major classification systems in the United States are the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), used primarily by non-academic libraries, and the Library of Congress Classification (LCC), used by academic and specialist libraries. The Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) "remains today one of the world's most widely-used classification" systems because of "[i]ts French-language origins . . . and is especially popular in the French-speaking countries of North Africa, in Spain and Latin America, and throughout Eastern Europe" (McIlwaine 331). Since Smith is a U.S. scholar and vexillologist, my analysis will use the Library of Congress Classification.

Beginning with Aristotle, the classical theory of classification "understood [that a] category was like an abstract container with things either inside or outside the container," the common properties of the information inside the container providing the definition of the category. However, mid-20th century criticism demonstrated that categories did not necessarily have a single collection of common properties by which information could be definitively placed inside or outside the container. The category "game," for example, "has no fixed boundary" because "a game may be for education, amusement, or competition, and it may involve luck or skill" (Taylor, *Organization of Information* 298). Thus, the *fuzzy set theory* and its offshoots suggests that categories are subjectively assigned depending on the user and the user's immediate needs; even categories that are "definite and distinct" in one culture or language may be much less so in others (Taylor, *Organization of Information* 299-300).

The classical theory of classification is the basis for the DDC, LCC, and UDC systems, which are hierarchical in origin (Taylor, *Organization of Information* 298, 302). Because the hierarchical systems usually assign some combination of numbers and/or letters to each category to permit assignment of a classification notation, they are also enu-



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merative. However, the classification notation under these systems does not permit the identification of other subtopics that an information package may contain. Faceted classification permits the assignment of a classification notation that contains “small notations standing for subparts of the whole topic strung together” to create a classification notation that expresses the information package’s complexity (Taylor, *Organization of Information* 302). The DDC and UDC have “been partially restructured on a faceted basis” (Taylor, *Cataloging & Classification* 396, 422). An added advantage is that “each facet may be searched independently” and allow one to research with precision (Taylor, *Organization of Information* 305). A fuller treatment of non-faceted and faceted classification is beyond the scope of this paper; what is important to note here is that classification systems must constantly confront the question of how to appropriately express the subject matter of an information package to permit assignment of a classification notation that aids retrieval of the information package by an interested user while showing interrelationships between topics.

## **B | Relevance of Classification in a Digital Age**

One might ask why, in the digital age, such things as classification and subject headings matter when a user may use keyword searches to retrieve a list of recorded information from an Internet search engine or online databases.

This position assumes that the full text of all information is available online. This is not true for at least two reasons. For as long as the digital revolution has been occurring, much of the printed information such as books and journal articles cannot be digitized “because of very real legal, economic, and preservation impediments” (Mann 15). Google abandoned its project to digitize out-of-print works held by academic libraries in part because of these impediments, including concerns over ownership of the resulting intellectual property. Moreover, information such as audio and visual files are not available as “full text” and require an intermediary to assess their subject matter and create an appropriate record. And since that record is not the “full text”, a keyword search will be unable to “convey... the full range and depth of information contained within” the work (Mann 18).

Consider the example of Timothy Wilson’s 1999 book *Flags at Sea: A Guide to the Flags Flown at Sea by Ships of the Major Maritime Nations, from the 16th Century to the Present Day, Illustrated from the Collections of the National Maritime Museum*. Under the LCC, it has been assigned to Class V, Naval Science. Its classification notation is V 305 G7 W55 1999, which permits a user to find the book on the library shelf. Using the class schedules for Class V, one sees that there are 10 subclasses, including (somewhat confusingly) that Subclass V is reserved for works on “Naval Science (general).” Under the Library of Congress Subject Headings, the primary subject is “Great Britain. Royal Navy — Flags — History.” However, there are additional subject headings assigned to Wilson’s book:

Flags — Great Britain — History.

Flags — History.

Signals and signaling.

A keyword search for “flag signals” may or may not return Wilson’s book as a relevant hit. In The University of Texas Libraries catalog, that search does not return the book on the first page of 15 results. The same search in WorldCat does not return the book



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on the first page of 10 results. Similarly for the keyword search “British navy signals,” while the generic “signals” is even more dismal. The keyword search “Royal navy signals” returns the book as the first result for UT Libraries and as the seventh result for WorldCat. While the researcher in the United Kingdom may think to use “Royal Navy,” it is more likely that persons outside the UK would use the term “British navy” or “English navy” to perform searches, illustrating neatly the problems of keyword searches even when research is conducted in one’s own language.

Classification systems “provide[] systematic, royalty-free, in-depth access” to recorded information (Mann 18). More importantly for the international vexillological community, classification, with its insistence on the assignment of classification notations composed of “numerical and other symbols[,] can transcend . . . language barriers” a user may face. That is, a classification notation for a dictionary of flag terminology will direct a user to similar works located on a shelf or in a database without the need to understand even the title of the work (Taylor, *Cataloging & Classification* 400).

### C | Evaluating Classification Systems

There are criteria for evaluating whether a classification system is successful (Taylor, *Cataloging & Classification* 396). Under these criteria, a successful classification system must be:

- a. “[I]nclusive as well as comprehensive”: the system must include all subjects “that are, have been, or may be recognized” in the field of knowledge being classified. The system must not only classify the actual information packages in the field of knowledge, “but also for every actual and potential use of the” information packages.
- b. Systematically comprehensible: It must comprise a “logical, comprehensible” system that “allow[s] its users to locate easily whatever they want that is available.” Subject aspects are separate yet related, and the entire system permits the addition of new subject and subject aspects “in a systematic manner.”
- c. Flexible and expandable: The system must be designed to permit the incorporation of new subjects and topics without “dislocating the general sequence of classification.” It must be kept current and permit flexibility in assigning classification notations.
- d. Transparent and descriptive: The system’s terms should “reveal the significance of the arrangement” used and use unambiguous, contemporary language to identify the “concepts and characteristics” of the information packages being classified.

I will use these criteria in evaluating the VCS and alternatives to that system.

## 2. Vexillological Classification Systems

“There has never been a recognized system for ordering knowledge in the field of flag history and symbolism,” Smith asserts, other than a simple arrangement of material by political biography (VCS 16). Smith thought a vexillology-specific classification system was useful for two “practical” purposes: (1) locating and filing research material and (2) identifying “gaps and inadequacies” in current vexillological research (VCS 17). He does not offer a critique of either the DDC, the UDC, or the LCC, but it is not hard to think of one.



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Under the DDC, the category “flags and banners,” classification notation 929.92, is under Section 929, Genealogy, names, insignia, which is part of Division 920, Biography and genealogy, which in turn is part of Class 900, History and geography. Similarly, under the UDC, the category “Flags. Standards. Banners,” classification notation 929.9, is under Class 9, “Geography. Biography. History.” Under the LCC, the category “flags, banners, and standards,” classification notations CR101-115, is under Subclass CR, heraldry, which is part of Class C, Auxiliary Sciences of History. If one views vexillology as a social science, as Smith does (“Fundamental Theses” 32), then classification of its materials as either history or an auxiliary science of history seems particularly galling. And to classify it within the “dead science” of heraldry only adds insult to injury (“Fundamental Theses” 33). Thus, developing his own classification system was a way to reject the marginalization of flags in scholarly study, clearly mark it as a social science discipline rather than one in the humanities, and solidify his status as the leading theorist of vexillology.

Smith’s system was used to classify Flag Bulletin articles in the 1982 and 1992 indexes (VCS 18; Index I 10-42; Index II 205-232). It was also used to organize the Flag Research Center’s vertical files (Smith, VCS 18). More recently, Dr. Scot Guenter assigned all papers presented at the three most recent International Congresses of Vexillology (1987, 1999, and 2011) held in North America to one of the system’s 10 categories to determine that the number of papers dealing with history declined from about one-half of the papers presented in 1987 to one-third in 2011, while the number of papers examining usage grew significantly in the same time period (3).

In describing the system, and despite his initial statement above, Smith acknowledges prior work in vexillological classification by Dr. Ottfried Neubecker, Dr. Alte Grahl-Madsen, and himself, with a nod to the heraldic classification system developed by Adolf Matthias Hildebrandt (VCS 16-17). However, he does not offer any critique of those systems or discuss how they may have influenced his development of the VCS. He notes that “Neubecker, for example, skillfully organized material in his 1939 book *Fahnen und Flaggen* and in his article “Fahne” in the *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*” (VCS 16) but does not describe this organization at all. The only prior works readily available for immediate comparison are Smith’s 1965 topical list and 1971 incomplete subject headings and Grahl-Madsen’s 1980 incomplete scheme.

#### **A | Smith’s 1965 Topical Index and 1971 Subject Headings**

For his 1965 *Bibliography of Flags of Foreign Nations*, Smith used 13 subject headings, reprinted in Appendix C, to classify the included works (vii). He also arranged the material by geography and included three appendixes: the first is a chronological list of maps with flag imagery, the second is a chronological listing of pre-1860 flag books listed under a main section, and the third is an incomplete listing of items concerning flag etiquette and ceremony that are listed in other parts of the book (*Bibliography* viii, 167-169).

Each entry in the bibliography is given a number, starting with 1, and entries within each subject heading or geographic subdivision are ordered alphabetically by the author’s last name or the title of the work if there is no known author (*Bibliography* v, 8). It seems that Smith ordered his initial collection sequentially; each later acquisition by the same author uses the same number followed by a letter code indicating



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its accession, which Smith explains is “the system which the Flag Research Center has found from its own experience to be most useful” (*Bibliography v*).

It is presently unknown whether Smith used the topical and geographical headings in “a nonrandom catalog [that was] keyed to the numbers on the book[s]” (Mann 16). He certainly did not print such a catalog or make his bibliographic records available to larger catalogs. He likely did use topical and geographical headings before the VCS was created: the pamphlet “Flags on Stamps,” deaccessioned from the Flag Research Center collection, contains topical headings in Smith’s handwriting made sometime before May 1971. For this pamphlet, Smith created the following topical headings:

“Primary interest: National flag in natural colors.

“Secondary interest: Design relating to history a national flag (e.g., USA 1952, Betsy Ross), a significant user (e.g., USA 1945, Raising flag at Iwo Jima), or use to symbolize a country (e.g., USA 1952, Lafayette). Not in natural color” (Webb, inside cover).

While the topical and geographical headings may have been useful during the Center’s early years, the “effectiveness [of a simple system] diminishes rapidly with the size of the institution” (Mann 16). Further, Smith does not explain why he did not simply use an existing classification system for organizing the Center’s holdings or the bibliography. Given that he was a doctoral student and graduate instructor during the time of the bibliography’s compilation, he likely did not have the time or inclination to undertake a detailed classification.

## **B | Grahl-Madsen’s Classification System**

Grahl-Madsen was a Norwegian law professor and a founder of the Nordic Flag Society (“Alte Grahl-Madsen” 179). In his 1980 article “Problems of Flag Terminology and Standardization,” he notes that language barriers prevented successful work to standardize flag terminology. He argued that a classification system would help identify vexillological concepts from which a standard flag terminology could be drawn and tentatively outlines a classification system (147-148).

His system is an incomplete theory for classification; none of the headings are fully developed through the 25 subclasses, nor was that the aim. Rather, it was suggested “to show how a systematic table of vexillological concepts may be designed” (149). It consists of ten main headings (or “chapters”), with each main heading divided into ten subheadings (“sections”), which may be further divided into ten classes, which in turn may be divided into 25 subclasses, indicated by a combination of Arabic numerals and letters.

Depending on the precision with which one classifies the information, the resulting classification number could range from a single digit, such as 2 to represent “flags defined by use or user”, to a four-place alphanumeric composition, such as 219A to represent “West European special ensigns as sea” (148-150). Thus, one advantage that Grahl-Madsen’s system offers is the unique classification notion, based on subject, to aid further research and future retrieval, a feature that the 1965 index lacks. The disadvantage is that Grahl-Madsen never fully developed his system and one is left to guess at the details of his other categories and subclasses.

## **Vexillological Classification System**

As Table 1 shows, Smith’s system incorporates the numeric class indicator of Grahl-



Madsen and elaborates on those classes by collapsing some, renaming others, and creating new classes; he also includes items, not expressed by Grahl-Madsen, reflected in his 1965 index. Smith provides only broad sketches of the subjects encompassed by each class and does not make a serious attempt to develop subject headings or other controlled vocabulary to permit the assignment of additional subjects to an information package. Confusingly, Class 8 of the Vexillological Classification System is "Vexillology". This class does not encompass the entire discipline as suggested by its name; rather, it is focused on the history of the field and the work of institutions and individuals. There are other inconsistencies; for example, the subject "political symbolism" is assigned to Class 6, Usage, rather than Class 5, Symbolism, without explanation.

He abandoned the use of alphanumeric indicators for the categories grouped under each class and does not explain how items should be grouped within each class; presumably by author, as with his 1965 index, but that is not explicit in his description. The lack of any meaningful classification notation makes evaluation of the information packages in each class practically impossible. For example, all items under Class 6, Usage, in the 1982 *Flag Bulletin* index are grouped by publication date (Smith, Index I, II). And even if one finds a descriptive title, one cannot be sure that the titled article is the only one on the subject or whether there are other related articles. The index is, for most practical purposes, useless.

Smith also makes no mention of the topical headings he used for at least some information packages held by the Flag Research Center. Since we do not know the nature or extent of the use of these headings, it is hard to judge whether they would have been of any use in constructing and using the system. Based on the single example, however, it seems that they would have added quite a bit.

**Table 1: Comparison of Vexillological Classification System to Antecedent Systems**

VCS	Grahl-Madsen	1965 Topical Index
0 Terminology	1 Types of flags 2 Flags defined by use or user	No equivalent
1 Theory	0 Abstract concepts	No equivalent
2 Documentation	No equivalent	Bibliography Catalogs
3 Technology	6 Materials, methods of production 7 Flagpoles, flagstaves, accessories	Technical Aspects of Flags
4 Design	3 Shapes, proportions, sizes, divisions, parts, fringes 4 Designs, charges 5 Colors	Red Flags
5 Symbolism	No equivalent	No equivalent
6 Usage	8 Flag usage	Legal Aspects of Flags
7 History	No equivalent	General (Through 1860) General (Since 1860) Antiquity and the Middle Ages Heraldic Flags International Flags Naval Flags Religious Flags
8 Vexillology	No equivalent	No equivalent
9 Miscellanea	9 Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous



An initial comparison of the VCS with the LCC system seems to support Smith's view that the existing classification systems were inadequate for vexillology, as some of his major classes do not have a corresponding class or category in the LCC, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Comparison of Vexillological Classification System to Library of Congress Classification**

VCS	LCC
0 Terminology	
1 Theory	JC345 Political Theory. Symbolism. National Emblems. State Emblems.
2 Documentation	CJ Numismatics
3 Technology	CR102 Conservation and restoration
4 Design	
5 Symbolism	
6 Usage	GV488 Flag-waving exercises JC 329 Patriotism
7 History	CR101 General works CR105 By period—Early CR107 By period—Medieval CR109 By period—Modern CR112 International or World Flag CR112.5 Spanish-American flag CR113 U.S.—General works CR113.2 U.S.—States (collectively) CR113.5 U.S.—Confederacy CR113.7 U.S.—New England CR114.A-W U.S.—By state, A-W CR114.5.A-Z U.S.—By city, A-Z CR115.A-Z Other regions or countries, A-Z (with further subdivisions under each by other geographical subdivision UC590 Military standards
8 Vexillology	CR101 General works
9 Miscellanea	CR101 General works CR191 Public and official heraldry

Source: LCC Classification Schedules

Not unsurprisingly for a topic described as an “auxiliary science of history,” a majority of the categories used for flags are related to flag histories, although this is somewhat deceiving. As noted, the use of subject headings within the LCC will provide coverage of topics expressed in the VCS that are left unexpressed in the LCC classification notation.

Consider Robert Bonner's *Colors and Blood: Flag Passions of the Confederate South* is assigned under the LCC to CR 113.5, which, as noted in Table 2, is reserved for works on flags of the Confederacy. LCC subject headings are:

- Flags — Confederate States of America.
- Symbolism in politics — Confederate States of America.
- Symbolism in politics — Southern States.
- Political culture — Southern States — History.
- United States — History — Civil War, 1861-1865.



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While the LCC classification notation suggests assignment to VCS Class 7, the subject headings indicate that the book contains information related to VCS Class 6, Usage, and may well relate to Class 5, Symbolism, as well. The fact that there is not a corresponding category in the LCC does not prevent that classification system from expressing topics that Smith expressed in the VCS.

Smith stated that it was “a prime requisite that [the VCS] be subject to constant rigorous review with an eye to improvement, refinement, or even complete redrafting” and that two specific questions should be considered in evaluating the VCS: “[w]hat kinds of data are not covered by” it and “[w]hat aspects of flags would be better understood if the present categories and their subdivisions in [the] VCS were rearranged?” (Smith, VCS 17-18).

Neither Smith nor any other scholar has undertaken any review of the system. Perhaps this is because of the scarcity of time; since most vexillologists also practice other, more gainful employment, what little time is available is spent on field or archival research. But if that research is to be made more productive and valuable, a workable classification system is necessary.

A review of the VCS is painfully short. Under any of the four criteria for a successful classification system identified above, the VCS fails. It does not perform the function of a classification system by either meaningfully ordering the physical location of information packages or showing interrelatedness with other information packages. It is under-inclusive; while it includes semiotics under “Theory” as a related discipline for understanding the principles of vexillology, it does not include semiotic theory or practice independently. Semiotics is a rich, interdisciplinary field that can offer significant vexillological insights into flag culture (Knowlton 28-30, 38-42). The inclusion of “Vexillology” as a class undermines the system by illustrating both its partial illogicality and the ease by which ambiguous language can creep into a system. It does not offer a classification notation that permits easy location and retrieval of those information packages. And it does not offer subject headings that permit the capture of all topics embraced by the information package. There may be others, but these shortcomings explain the failure of vexillologists to adopt the VCS.

### 3. Recommendation for Improvements to the VCS

If the VCS is, unfortunately, not very useful for any sort of serious task, one possible solution is to simply abandon the idea of a separate classification system for vexillology and adopt one of the major classification systems. An individual could classify their home libraries by inputting each information package into an online union catalog such as WorldCat and ascertain a classification notation and assigned subject headings. Platoff’s bibliographic International Vexillological Index project could do the same for its included works. The amount of time needed to implement such a system would only be the time needed to input the works.

While this approach has the advantage of using an existing system, it is not perfect and will result in some material being classified in a way which obscures the information package’s vexillological content. Consider the anthology *Faith and Race in American Political Life*, which contains Susan M. Gordon’s essay “What Would Robert E. Lee



Do? Race, Religion, and the Debate over the Confederate Battle Flag in the American South." The anthology's LCC classification notation assigns it to E 184, which is "History of the Americas—United States—Elements in the population." None of the subject headings include "Flags — Confederate States of America." Use of the LCC classification here is meaningless because neither the classification notation nor the subject headings reflect Gordon's important essay. And as already noted, some flag-related material is assigned classification notations that separate that material from the larger body of material. This is unsurprising. Comprehensive classification systems like the LCC, DDC, and UDC are "largely inflexible" and "often disperse subjects that, for the purposes of specialist, ought to be dealt with in close proximity" (Taylor, *Cataloging & Classification* 462).

Thus, Smith's idea that some sort of separate classification system for vexillology is needed is correct. The defects in the VCS may be remedied by looking to the classification system employed by the American Economic Association. The Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) Classification System assigns a 3-digit subject code to each article published by the journal, and multiple subject codes may be assigned to an article. The system uses the following 20 classes for its subject headings:

- A- General Economics and Teaching
- B- History of Economic Thought, Methodology, and Heterodox Approaches
- C- Mathematical and Quantitative Methods
- D- Microeconomics
- E- Macroeconomics and Monetary Economics
- F- International Economics
- G- Financial Economics
- H- Public Economics
- I - Health, Education, and Welfare
- J - Labor and Demographic Economics
- K- Law and Economics
- L - Industrial Organization
- M- Business Administration and Business Economics; Marketing; Accounting
- N- Economic History
- O- Economic Development, Technological Change, and Growth
- P- Economic Systems
- Q- Agricultural and Natural Resource Economics; Environmental and Ecological Economics
- R- Urban, Rural, Regional, Real Estate, and Transportation Economics
- Y- Miscellaneous Categories
- Z- Other Special Topics

The system uses subject headings under each class and uses guidelines and keywords to help users assign information packages to the appropriate subject code. For example, in Class A, General Economics and Teaching, the accompanying guidelines explain that the class "[c]overs studies about general economics"; there are no assigned keywords. In subclass A1, General Economics, the guideline explains that it "[c]overs studies about general issues related to economics in a broad perspective, including the relation of economics to other disciplines and social values" and its assigned keywords are "Economic Bibliographies, Economics, General Economics." This category is adequately explained and detailed as the general category for the disci-



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pline, unlike VCS Class 8, Vexillology. The subject codes for Class A1 are:

- A10 General
- A11 Role of Economics; Role of Economists; Market for Economists
- A12 Relation of Economics to Other Disciplines
- A13 Relation of Economics to Social Values
- A14 Sociology of Economics
- A19 Other

The system continues this division and explanation throughout, which provides a robust system for assessing the subjects expressed in an information package. Thus, for the working paper "Bite the Bullet: Trade Retaliation, EU Jurisprudence and the Law and Economics of 'Taking One for the Team'", the JEL codes are:

- F13 (International Economics—Trade—Commercial Policy; Protection; Promotion; Trade Negotiations),
- K41 (Law & Economics—Legal Procedure, the Legal System, and Illegal Behavior—Litigation Process), and
- K42 (—, —, Illegal Behavior and the Enforcement of Law).

This method allows for a form of simplified classification notation within the framework of a controlled vocabulary that provides the user with an idea of an information package's subjects and a way to gain insights for further research and investigation. It provides for the benefits of faceted classification simply to permit explication of subjects while retaining a flexible hierarchy that provides guidance to classifiers.

The task of creating, modifying, and maintaining a classification system is a daunting one that would likely exhaust the energies of a single person. The work of reforming the Vexillological Classification System should be a collective one, with a stable working team evenly balanced between vexillological viewpoints and a diversity of professional backgrounds. While it may seem helpful for the work to be undertaken under the auspices of the Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques, that is not essential and may be counter-productive because it could involve unnecessary delay from obtaining General Assembly approval for its adoption or modification. A good classification system must be revised as needed to retire discarded subjects, adapt to changes in political institutions and nations, and introduce new subjects as they are developed within the discipline. That work is done best by an autonomous body that is removed from politics.

## 4. Conclusion

Proper classification of information packages aids the researcher and scholar, and thus furthers the discipline of vexillology. The major classification systems do not always provide the proper classification notations and subject headings to aid vexillological research. The need for a separate classification system for vexillology is necessary and desirable, but none of the systems used to date are satisfactory for continued use. Looking to classification systems used in other disciplines, a working group of diverse vexillological viewpoints and professional backgrounds can reform Smith's Vexillological Classification System to enable it to be the aid intended by its creator.



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## Appendix A

### Smith's Vexillological Classification System

#### Basic Categories

o Terminology	5 Symbolism
1 Theory	6 Usage
2 Documentation	7 History
3 Technology	8 Vexillology
4 Design	9 Miscellanea

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#### o Terminology

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definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•modern words and phrases (all languages)</li><li>•obsolete words and phrases</li><li>•proposed definitions</li><li>•etymology</li></ul>
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intercultural comparisons of meaning

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#### 1 Theory

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principles of vexillology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•definition of objectives and scope</li><li>•fundamental hypotheses</li><li>•problems and criticism</li><li>•research techniques; data collections; reconstruction of data</li><li>•relationship to other disciplines (e.g. semiotics)</li><li>•data classification system</li></ul>
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flags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•taxonomy (correlation of terminology, history, forms, and uses)</li><li>•relationships to patriotism, nationalism, religion</li><li>•relationships to other symbols</li></ul>
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#### 2 Documentation

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bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•laws</li><li>•books</li><li>•periodicals</li><li>•plates, charts</li><li>•inventories</li><li>•manuscripts</li><li>•non-flag books</li></ul>
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non-print information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•actual flags, including collections</li><li>•paintings</li><li>•coins, stamps, artifacts</li></ul>
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### 3 Technology

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Flag-making

- construction of flags and flag accessories (all methods)
- flag-manufacturing industry

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Flag-hoisting

- equipment
- methods

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Flag-preservation

- theories and practice
- storage handling cleaning
- museum display techniques
- dating of old flags

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### 4 Design

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composition elements

- color
- symbols
- shapes

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composition principles and practice

- blazonry, heraldic laws
- vexillography
- art theory

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composition analysis

- flag design groupings
- flag identification systems
- flag description codes

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### 5 Symbolism

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theory

- communication functions of flags
- symbol typology
- symbol interpretation
- overt and covert symbolism
- control of meanings

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practice

- catalog of symbols and meanings
- catalog of colors and meanings

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### 6 Usage

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general functions

- flag behavior
- flag events
- flag actors
- national characteristics

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specific customs

- political symbolism
- commercial exploitation
- artistic uses of flag themes
- naval flag etiquette

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- land flag etiquette
  - aerial and extra-terrestrial flag etiquette
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- legal aspects
- legal standing of flags
  - flags of protest; outlawed flags
  - dates of usage
  - proposed flags
  - flags in advertising and packaging
  - flag etiquette codes
- 

## 7 History

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- Development of flags
- origins of flags
  - growth and cultural diffusion of flags
  - vexillification
- 

- Flag histories
- national flags
  - provincial flags
  - military flags
  - civic flags
  - corporate flags
  - personal flags
  - rank flags
  - international flags
  - naval flags
- 

## 8 Vexillology

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History of vexillology

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- Institutions and activities
- FIAV
  - International Congresses of Vexillology
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individuals

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## 9 Miscellanea

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- activities
- flag-related occupations
  - flags as a hobby
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- related studies
- heraldry
  - sphragistics
  - classification of political units
  - imaginary flags (including flags in literature and flags of supposititious countries)
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## Appendix B



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## Grahl-Madsen's Vexillological Classification System

### Main Headings (Chapters)

- 0 Abstract concepts
- 1 Types of flags
- 2 Flags defined by use or user
- 3 Shapes, proportions, sizes, divisions, parts, fringes
- 4 Designs, charges
- 5 Colors
- 6 Materials, methods of production
- 7 Flagpoles, flagstaves, accessories
- 8 Flag usage
- 9 Miscellaneous

### Subheadings (Sections)

#### Chapter 1: Types of flags

- 11 Ordinary flags
- 12 Ancient flag types (e.g., gonfanon, labarum, vexillum)
- 13 Heraldic flags (e.g., armorial banner, bannerroll, heraldic standard)
- 14 Flying banners (e.g., civic banner, regimental colour, standard)
- 15 Hanging banners (church banner, corporate banner)
- 16 Odd shapes (drum banner, pipe and trumpet banner, guidon, schwenkel)
- 17 Streamers, etc. (beauséant, lance flag, pennant, pennon)
- 18 Flags made of metal, plastic, etc.
- 19 Flag representatives and flag presentations

#### Chapter 2: Flags defined by use or user

- 11 Nationality flags (including national flag, government flag, war flag, ensigns)
- 12 International flags (e.g., United Nations flag, Council of Europe flag, NATO flag)
- 13 Service flags (army, navy, air force flags, regimental flags, customs flag, postal flag, etc.)
- 14 Maritime flags (signal flags, burgees, house flags, novelty flags)
- 15 Local and regional flags (e.g., city flags, provincial flags)
- 16 Corporative flags (such as party, church, and corporation flags)
- 17 Personal flags (e.g., royal standard, president's flag, generals' and admirals' flags)
- 18 Private and miscellaneous flags
- 19 Historical flags

### Subdivision (Classes)

#### Section 21: Nationality flags

- 211 National flag (on land and at sea)
  - 213 National flag on land
  - 213 Merchant marine flag ("civil ensign")
  - 214 Government flag on land
  - 215 Government vessels ensign
  - 216 War flag on land
  - 217 War ensign at sea
  - 218 Special flags on land
  - 219 Special ensigns at sea
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## Appendix C

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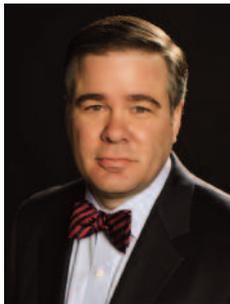
### Smith's 1965 Topical Headings

General (Through 1860)  
General (Since 1860)  
Antiquity and the Middle Ages  
Bibliography  
Catalogs  
Heraldic Flags  
International Flags  
Legal Aspects of Flags  
Miscellaneous  
Naval Flags  
Red Flags  
Religious Flags  
Technical Aspects of Flags

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