UNIFORMITY IN BOOK SIZES: A NEED OF THE HOUR

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Non-conventional sized books (over and undersize) are a common problem of all libraries. Several methods of shelving such publications have been applied, but librarians are still finding it hard to cope with the increasing diversities in book sizes due to limitations of shelving capacity. Discusses publisher's role in the matter from librarian's point of view starting from the receipt of manuscript. Suggests possible ways and means for bringing about uniformity in book sizes and stresses the need for creating cordial relations between librarians and publishers.

INTRODUCTION

The expected outcome of the work of scholars and researchers is normally some form of publication. Ideas, findings, data, opinions are embodied graphically within the physical forms of journal articles, conference papers, monographs, reports, books, computer print-outs, video-display units, etc. in order to pass them to the realms of public and scholarly discourse.

The act of publication is an attempt to present the literature to the largely unknown audience for information and assessment overcoming the barriers of time and space.

The publisher is responsible for giving the physical form to the author's ideas in order to make them worthy of perusal. In diverse physical forms, the publications are acquired, processed and shelved by the libraries and information centres, to make them available to its patrons. Non-conventional size books (over and undersize) are a common problem of all libraries, no matter how big or small it is, since these publications require special consideration in their processing, shelving and maintenance. Several methods of shelving are in practice to accommodate such publications. Libraries are finding it hard to cope with the increasing diversities in book sizes due to their limitations of shelving capacity.

Much has been talked about in books and journals on various aspects of book-publishing but little emphasis has been given for bringing uniformity in book sizes. The basic idea of the discussion is to review the existing diversities, particularly non-conventional sizes. The discussion excludes some of the publications like atlases, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, directories and yearbooks where unusual size cannot be avoided due to the nature of the material.

The study narrates the publisher's role from librarian's point of view, starting from the receipt of the manuscript. It also suggests the possible means and ways for bringing about uniformity in book sizes. It further suggests the need for creating cordial relationship between the publisher and the librarian.

The study coupled with appropriate examples and figures provides a clear picture to the professionals in understanding the reasons of these variations and their possible solutions.

BOOK SIZES

In any library, it is hard to find two books identical in height or width, even volumes of a single set are sometimes different in sizes. On the basis of the sizes, the books have been named as Narrow - if the width is less than 3/5 of the height; Square - if the width is more than 3/4 of the height; and Oblong or Landscape - if the width is greater than the height.

The books have also been grouped on the basis of the trim-sizes (outside dimensions of the paper page after the book has been trimmed.
UNIFORMITY IN BOOK SIZES

Measurements are given in inches with the width being given first) as seen in certain trade books e.g.

5 3/8 x 8" - Fiction and non-fiction of minor importance
5 1/2 x 8 1/4" - Non-fictions
6 1/8 x 9 1/4" - Non-fiction of major importance and the college texts
8 1/2 x 11" - Pictorial books
4 1/2 x 7" - Paper backs

Folio, quarto, octavo are also used as indications of approximate size of the books.

BOOK SIZES AND THE PRINTING PAPER

According to Marshall Lee, "The paper merchant keeps hundred of items in stock - different brands, kinds, qualities, finishes, colors, weight and sizes. Obviously, he wants to reduce this number to the fewest possible. The printer has presses of various sizes, but the number is limited. Presuming the publishers want to utilize the full size of the presses, they need mainly the paper sizes that fit the presses available. Consequently paper is made in a few standard sizes and any other must be made to order. Each paper mill has its own minimum quantity requirements for making special sizes in each grade of paper".

Further according to Marshall Lee, "the page size of the book is generally an arbitrary decision based primarily on custom. Economy affects the decision, but in most cases custom has been shaped by economy, so there is little conflict. Once a press size has been standardized to accommodate a preferred trimsize, paper is made to fit that size."

Foregoing paragraphs illustrate that there is no definite policy to decide the book sizes. With the result diversities of a high magnitude has become a part of this trade. Whatever trimsize is desired by the publisher, the book is made accordingly without considering much about the actual consumers.

BOOK SIZES AND ANGLO-AMERICAN CATALOGUING RULE

AACR rule 2.5 D has been framed to describe the diversities in book sizes and as per this rule, the height of the publication is to be given in centimeters exact to within one centimeter. Books 10 centimeters or less in height are to be described in millimeters. In case of bound volumes the height of the binding is to be given, while for a pamphlet inserted in the binder, the height of the pamphlet is given.

Width of the publication is to be given if it is less than half the height or if it is greater than the height, the height is to be given first.

If there is a difference of less than 2 centimeters in the size of the volumes of a set, the larger size is to be given. If the difference is more than 2 centimeters, the inclusive sizes are to be given, while a set with single variation in size, the prevailing size is given followed by the variation.

The rule provides a coverage to the existing variations and giving an idea to the reader about the size of the publication followed by the location mark in the catalog entry, if the publication is of unconventional size. This does not provide solutions to the library personnel in processing and accommodating these publications.

UNCONVENTIONAL SIZES

In every library there are materials other than the normal run. In technical or research libraries they form a high proportion of the stock. It has been well established that about 10% of the entire collection is of unconventional size. The percentage seems to be small but the library personnel have much inconvenience in their processing, shelving maintenance and making them available to the readers.

Table in the next page provides a comparative study of few cases to show the unconventional sizes (over and under size) against preferred trim-size of 6x9", besides specifying the book length in context to the book size and vice-versa.

Examples 3, 9 and 10 in the Table show that the books have over height with book length running to few pages, contrary to this is seen in examples 1 and 6. These examples clearly indicate the monopolistic approaches of the publishers and confirm that the size of the book is on the mercy of the publisher. Whatever paper size is desired or available on hand, the book is designed accordingly without considering much about the pre and post publication form of it.

Figure-I explains how different book sizes are accommodated on the shelf. The book-1 (H1 x W1) is of normal size and can be accommodated within the shelf. The book-2 (H2 x W2), where the book height is more than the shelf height (examples-2,3,4,5 in the Table). The book is to be kept on its fore-edges, the height becoming the width projected out of the shelf as is true for book-3.
MANZOOR

TABLE

Comparative Sizes and Lengths of the Unconventional Books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Particulars of the books</th>
<th>Pages (Book length)</th>
<th>Size* (Height x Width)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Rumaihi, M G: Bahrain; social and political change since the first world war. New York, Bowker, 1976.</td>
<td>xiv, 258p</td>
<td>11.12 x 8.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Measurements are shown in inches exact to the height and width of the books. (This is contrary to AACR, but are given to illustrate the exact situation).

(H3 x W3) and 5 (H5 x W5), where the width is more than the shelf depth (example-1 in the Table). The book-4 (H4 x W4) is undersize and appears buried within large size books.

The above cases are common to most of the libraries. They provide a clear picture to the problem and emphasises the need for uniformity.

DISADVANTAGES OF UNCONVENTIONAL SIZES

Unconventional size publications require special treatments in their processing, shelving and maintenance. These treatments are usually inconvenient and time consuming in addition to the following disadvantages for the library personnel and the readers.

1. Avoiding Single Sequence

Basic idea of the library is to provide easy access to the material available by arranging it in the most convenient manner. Increasing diversities in book sizes are hampering the libraries in accommodating the entire collection in a simple manner. Libraries are adopting different methods to solve the growing problem of shelving of the unconventional sizes.

Some libraries plan separate sequence on the basis of sizes as practiced by some...
2 Reduciton of Shelving Space

The overall effect of unconventional sizes is on the shelving capacity of an individual library. Oversized books shelved with normal books result in occupying more space, since they are accommodated by keeping them on their fore-edges or horizontally, thus occupying more space than their actual sizes. These books project out beyond the shelf depth making access difficult and reducing the between-stack area.

With regard to undersize books, they are usually lost in between other larger books or even sometimes they are pushed behind them, misleading the reader about their availability in the library. In order to overcome this problem, some libraries keep them in book boxes along with other books, which again leads to occupying more space.

To accommodate the oversized publications with the remaining stock, modifications have to be made in the height of shelves. Bottom shelves or sometimes the uppermost shelves are left for such publications by adjusting the tiers at different heights. Distance at which shelves are fixed is of course mainly of interest in that it affects the number of shelves that can be fitted per tier and the overall shelving capacity of the library.

3 Limitations of Shelving System

Every library is equipped with specific type of shelves. Flexibility in the housing capacity of the shelves is a matter of concern for all the libraries.

Libraries having fixed shelves, wall mounted shelves, closed back shelves or pannel shelves face extra problem in accommodating unconventional size books, since no flexibility in the structure is possible.

Experience shows that once a library starts with certain shelving system, it finds it hard to change over to some other system due to their limitations, more particularly the funds available for such expenditures. Libraries are left with no option but to compromise with the existing system until there is some possibility for a change.
Physical Damage to the Books

Unfavourable storage of the books tend to cause physical damage to books. The books of unconventional sizes are usually kept on their fore-edges or horizontally or even sometimes on the upper edges of other books of a particular shelf. This not only gives a poor look to the shelves but causes wear and tear to the books, thereby reducing the average span of these books.

SUGGESTIONS

In order to overcome the growing diversities in book sizes, the following points are suggested:

1. Need for Cooperation between Librarians and Publishers

Cooperation prevails in all walks of life. It enables us to work as team and to reap the maximum benefits of our efforts. The same may be applied to the book publishing. Publishers must realize that neither library development nor book publishing development can proceed very far without full cooperation from the other. To help their own future the publishers should do everything they can to aid the development of libraries, in addition to helping the educational and economic advances of their countries.

The library planners, manufacturers of the library furniture, equipment are going shoulder to shoulder with the librarians, in finding out the possible means and ways which are most suitable to the libraries. The outcome of their cooperation is providing economy in expenses as well as in space. Various devices for shelving, including that of compact shelving, are the result of their cooperation.

It is rather surprising to see that there exist no definite relation, except that of trade, between the publishers and the librarians - the major consumers of the books. (R.E. Barker in a report submitted to UNESCO in 1956 stated that half of the global book production goes to the libraries). There is vital need for close cooperation between them, more particularly at pre-publication stage of an individual book. In consultation with each other certain norms are to be laid down for bringing out the uniformity.

Cooperation between publishers, keeping aside the competitive urge, may play a part in reducing the diversities in book sizes. Professional organisations, associations of national and international importance may play a vital role by cooperating on this aspect.

There is a growing need for holding seminars, conferences in order to provide the opportunities for the librarians and publishers to exchange their views and to develop the understanding about each other's problems and limitations in the best possible way. It will further help in eliminating diversities, reducing competition followed by economy in prices.

The cooperation will help in getting the publications of uniform sizes, thus simplifying the processing and maintenance of all the publications in a uniform way. (Fig.II).

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**FIG.II : Book production cycle. Dashed line showing the need for new link between librarian and publisher to specify the physical size of the book.**
UNIFORMITY IN BOOK SIZES

2 Possible Role of the Publishers

Publishing is a business and the object of a business is to reap the profit, however, the publisher must realise that it is only the profit motive that book publishing resembles any other business, otherwise it is much more informal, complicated and hazardous than most. It differs from other manufacturing business, since it produces a hundred entirely different products in one year, each one a unique creation by an independent individual who has determined personally what the product shall be. There is no way of knowing how many buyers will be there for it.

Physical manufacture of the book is not the part of the publishing functions and most publishers today employ outside designers, printers and binders to perform these operations, but as a coordinator of the entire book production process, it is obligatory on the part of the publisher to supervise and control the reproduction of the work. He has the responsibility of designing the layout, title page, dust jacket and binding. He chooses the style and size of type, selects the paper and specifies the method of composition and presswork to be used.

It is the designing stage which seems to be crucial in determining the physical form of the book and a check at this stage will result in getting fruitful result. In the production schedule while specifying the trim-size by the publisher, decision should not be based on the paper size available in the stock at a given time, but it should be decided in the light of the manuscript and its actual destination i.e. library. While designing the book, they should not overlook the average height and depth ratios of the shelves.

The publishers must try to prevent the books being trapped in the commercial and industrial system. They should further realise that the introduction of wide varieties in this trade for the sake of aesthetic urge seems to be of little value, since the fate of a product is decided on the utility of the contents. Diversity is playing only the role of increasing competition followed by economic stress on the consumers.

3 Standardization

Standardization of human activities, operations, tools, forms, records and materials is a fundamental pre-requisite to scientific management. Standardization has been the foundation for the before-mentioned controls. It has made possible much of the technological progress of the 20th century.

The objective of standardization is to eliminate useless, wasteful and disadvantageous diversity. It brings more regularity, reliability and facilitates interchangeability.

Librarians have long been cognizant of its importance and the standardization of library equipment, materials and methods has gained wider acceptance.

Partial attempts have also been made in book publishing trade by fixing certain trim sizes for books, but the picture is still far from bright. Some kind of uniformity is being observed quite rigidly in trade paper backs where price is the primary element to satisfy the retailers.

In the middle of the 20th century printers attempted to bring uniformity in book sizes by keeping certain presses set for one size of sheet, plates and margins. Partial standardization by the manufacturers of the presses have also been attempted to fit the most popular trim sizes.

Standards for page size have been issued by British Standards Institution (BS: 1413:1970) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO: R216) but the study reveals that the advances in this direction have been painfully slow, due to competitive practices followed by the publishers.

Standardization in paper size will bring a direct control to the problem. Extensive efforts by the paper manufacturers at national and international level are needed to develop a cordial atmosphere on this aspect. Introduction of standard "Library Size" printing paper for books in the light of average shelf height and depth will be the most appropriate action in this direction.

Once "Library Size" paper is introduced in book publishing, it will not be very far to see its impact upon uniformity.

IMPACT OF STANDARDIZATION

It will be in two ways -

1. On book-publishing trade

- Uniformity in paper sizes.
- Simplifying the paper stocking,
- estimating and costing.
- Simplifying the handling and packaging.
- Uniformity in press sizes.
- Simplifying the designer's job.
- Simplifying the collation.
- Economising the production cost (smaller the page size lesser the cost of paper and printing)
- Reducing the competition among publishers
- Reducing the unwanted varieties.
- Simplifying the binder's job.

2. On libraries
- Simplification in processing, shelving and maintenance.
- Economising the buying cost.
- Possibility for accommodating all books in single sequence.
- Proving easy access to the readers.
- Maximising the shelving capacity.
- Eliminating the limitations of shelving system, whether fixed, adjustable, pannel or any other.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the above discussion will bring some fruitful result in this direction. If due consideration is given by the publishing team, some kind of uniformity will be seem. Further, it is hoped that the publishers will do their best by avoiding the production of unconventional size books to help the libraries on one hand and the readers on the other hand.

REFERENCES