

Organizing Different Sizes

Few things are more irritating, and more daunting, than realizing that you have to reorganize a large collection from scratch—all those thousands of covers have to be laboriously taken out of the old pages, reshuffled in the new manner, and then put all back together again on new pages. I've done that several times over the years. Take it from me...you *don't* want to do that if you don't have to. So, the trick is not having to...which entails always thinking ahead in organizing your covers.

The basic, and most common, method of organization for covers is alphabetical, whether alphabetizing everything together, or subdividing them first by state or in some other manner. Well, that works fine if you're only dealing with one size of cover, but what do you do when your collection entails 10s, 20s, 30s, 40s, boxes, and miscellaneous foreign sizes?

I initially started out years ago by sticking to the alphabetizing rule, so I would have 10-strike A's, then 20-strike A's, 30-strike A's, etc...then all the B's...and so on. And, since that was before plastic pages, that means I would have 10-strike A's on 10-strike slit pages, then the 20-strike A's on 20-strike slit pages, then 30-strike A's on 30-strike slit pages, and so on. At, say, one page for each letter, that was a minimum 26 pages *per size*! Lots of wasted space! But, I could have lived with that.

Well, these days no one is making slit pages anymore, and there's only one manufacturer of the plastic pages I use (Bettermue). If the Bettermue guy closes up shop, I'm in trouble. And plastic pages are somewhat expensive anyhow. So, pages, and page *space*, are at a premium and have become problematic.

With the organizational system outlined above, there is a *lot*, of wasted space, and a *lot*, of wasted pages. You have those two 10-strike A covers sitting on a page all by themselves, for example, because that's all the 10-strike A's you have. And the rest of the page is empty. And the chances of you eventually finding enough 10-strike A's to fill that page are slim to none. But you can't put other letter 10-strikes on that page because then your alphabetical system would be messed up.

Now, if you're using plastic pages, you could theoretically use all 40-strike pages, and then all sizes would fit on those pages. But, that's not practical, because the smaller sized covers just slide around in the bigger pockets, and the resulting pages are a mess.

What to do? What to do? Well, the solution I settled on solves all these problems and works fine, at least for me. I alphabetize each size *individually*, so that I end up with A-Z in 20s, then A-Z in 30s, etc. In most categories, there are relatively few 10s, Midgets, Jewels, etc. I have these alphabetized according to their respective sizes, as well, but compacted, with multiple letters on a page. That saves a lot of pages.

Another suggested tip that works for all sizes except 10's and Midgets, and which also saves a lot of pages, is, for example, using one side of a page for the A's, but using the reverse side for B's, rather than leaving the reverse side empty in expectation of getting in more A's...someday! If you *do* get in more A's and need more space, you just add a page *in front* of the one you're working with. If you run out of space with the B's, you just add a page *in back* of that. You can only do this with the last page of each letter, but it still saves you pages, and you can use it in conjunction with my other suggested solution.