

come from a variety of sources, and if one accepts the maxim that the customer is always right, then user input is essential. The goal is to have repeat users who expect a certain level of familiarity at the Web site and can use the site independently.

The richest chapter in *Designing Web Interfaces* is devoted to content. The authors cover in detail the variety of library resources and services and the relationships among online catalogs, commercial databases, local resources, and Internet access. They show the importance of such issues as restricted access, the wide variety of delivery options, explanations for printing and saving information, and the increasing need for client software to use some Web resources. One of the major challenges in creating a library Web site is establishing valuable links from one part of the site to another. Web sites have the potential to become denser and more complicated as more content becomes available, and good design takes the user to the relevant information with the fewest possible layers or clicks. There are many hints in this book and many cases and examples, however most Web development is a combination of individual preference and ease of use. There is valuable information in the appendix directing the reader to a range of resources on Web design. The cost of the book is surprising, though, given its brevity and the existence of many other books on this subject.

Design Wise is a different take on Web development. Alison Head stresses the need to rethink how Web sites are designed. She poses some difficult questions and offers ideas for change in this interesting book on software and Web development, providing a solid introduction to human-computer interaction (HCI) and showing how improvements can be made in designing interactive media.

This excellent book begins with the statement, "*Design Wise* is about making better choices" (xv). At the

conclusion, the reader will be prepared to do so with more ideas and knowledge. In the first part of the book, Head emphasizes design theory and in the second demonstrates how to apply it in designing Web sites. As a reference book, *Design Wise* includes many viewpoints, and the contextual framework is one with which anyone in the information industry—programmer, librarian, publisher, content provider, contributor, or user—can identify. As an information scientist herself, Head also incorporates several interviews with leaders and pioneer architects that make the process of Web design all the more real and legitimate. The brief interviews with Don Norman, Jakob Nielsen, Reva Basch, Peter Jacso, Lou Rosenfeld, and Anne Mintz are objective and inspiring. Head includes examples to support many hypotheses and ideas, from a variety of sources in different sectors. The inclusion of a range of educational sites, banking and commercial Web pages, those from the giants IBM and Microsoft, plus some not-so-good examples brings helpful insight into why HCI is so valuable in creating more user-centered Web designs. Head includes design evaluation templates based on accepted principles, but adds new focus to them by illustrating how interface design can be improved. As more diverse user groups emerge, Head considers how critical it is to design for users with special needs.

Design Wise is objective and creative in its treatment of three leading media forms: CD-ROMs, Web sites, and online commercial databases. For anyone who thinks that CD-ROMs are a passing fad in institutional environments in the developed world but appreciates their value for individual users or in the developing world, this chapter is refreshing reading. Head also prepares her reader for predictions about Web design in the book's final chapter. Those who are experienced in Web design and who follow

industry trends will concur that knowledge management has surfaced; intelligent agents have not conquered the world as we hoped; searching has and will become more sophisticated and intelligent, engendering even more optimistic expectations; and finally, that librarians as information professionals have a challenging and exciting future if they take the opportunity to "contribute and accelerate an important dimension to user-centered design, especially through their understanding of information-seeking behavior" (173). This book, full of practical wisdom, insights, and creativity is a "must read" for all information professionals.—*Julia Gelfand (jgelfand@sun1.lib.uci.edu), University of California, Irvine Library*

Introduction to Vocabularies: Enhancing Access to Cultural Heritage Information. By Elisa Lanzi. Los Angeles: Getty Information Institute, 1998. 62p. \$14.95 (ISBN 0-89236-544-7) LC 98-38514. Also available at www.getty.edu/gri/vocabularies/introvocabs.

Introduction to Archival Organization and Description. By Michael J. Fox, Peter L. Wilkerson. Ed. Suzanne Warren. Los Angeles: Getty Information Institute, 1998. 58p. \$14.95 (ISBN 0-89236-545-5) LC 98-38502. Also available at www.getty.edu/gri/standard/introarchives.

These two superb compact monographs were published in 1998 as part of the now-defunct Getty Information Institute's "Introduction to" series. They are first-rate in the way they synthesize and explain complex information about the use of vocabulary tools and archival descriptive practices. An outstanding feature of these two books is the diversity of audiences who can benefit from their use. Both are of value to seasoned custodians and students in library and information science, museum studies, and archival

programs—to those who are aware of information organization standards and the principles underlying efforts to control and provide access to cultural resources and archival holdings—and to those who are learning about standards, principles, and practices for the first time. Perhaps most important, these books are of enormous value in the cultural resource or archival repository that has functioned mainly under the guidance of in-house, homegrown practices and localized schemas, but now wants to contribute to the growing networked world of cultural resources and archival access. These excellent books are indispensable for any institution that wants to make its resources Web-accessible in a way that will support collection control and access and will facilitate interoperable exchange of information.

Introduction to Vocabularies opens with a “A View from the Top” by David Green, executive director of the National Initiative for Networked Cultural Heritage. This “special message for administrators of cultural heritage collections,” (1) will certainly get cultural heritage custodians who are currently functioning in isolation thinking about the value of shared vocabularies in the networked environment. *Vocabularies*, intended for practitioners, students, administrators, educators, and researchers working with cultural resources, covers the what, why, and how of standards for documenting cultural heritage information, with emphasis on standard vocabularies for description. Chapter 5 is a detailed introduction to the Getty vocabularies: *The Art & Architecture Thesaurus*, the *Union List of Artists Names*, and the *Getty Thesaurus for Geographic Names*. Chapter 6 focuses on more advanced vocabulary-related matters, such as search assistants, database and catalog issues, browsers, and the multilingual aspect of vocabularies. This book concludes with a resource section that

provides a list of acronyms and abbreviations essential to the field, a list of readings, and an excellent compendium that lists tools, guides, manuals, organizations, projects, and training opportunities for individuals who want to expand their knowledge in this area.

The layout of the *Introduction to Archival Organization and Description* is similar to that of *Vocabularies*. In the introduction, Suzanne Warren notes the growth of the archival profession and the development of principles and standards that facilitate control of and access to archival materials. The book is divided into four parts: “Archival Principles, Archival Practices”; “Archival Analysis, Archival Description”; “Putting it All Together: How the Archivist Works”; and “What’s Ahead in Description and Access.” Warren notes that the book “serves as an orientation to fundamental archival principles for the beginning and novice archivist, and demonstrates how the work of an archivist flows from them” (vii). Archival descriptive activities are grounded in two fundamental principles, *provenance* and *original order*. The authors discuss the importance of these concepts and how they guide archival description. Archival thinking has expanded beyond these boundaries to include discussions on *fonds* and *functional provenance* that might be included in a new edition of this book. The book ends with the informative “Tutorial: An Over-the-Shoulder View of an Archivist at Work,” followed by a great little glossary, a list of acronyms that are important to the field, a bibliography for further reading covering tools and technical resources, and a list of Web resources providing useful examples and links to organizations, training, and educational opportunities.

Both of these books are worthwhile; in fact, one hopes that second editions of both will be forthcoming. Though the format of these little volumes is appealing, a larger font would

be appreciated.—Jane Greenberg (jane@ils.unc.edu), School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences. By Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Pr., 1999. 377p. \$29.95. (ISBN 0-262-02461-6) LC99-26894.

Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences is well characterized by its subtitle. Bowker and Star examine both the social, political, and economic forces that shape classifications and the social, political, and economic consequences of classification. The book consists of an introduction to classification as a part of social infrastructure; a thorough examination of the creation and operation of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD); two cases of the effect of classification on individuals’ lives (tuberculosis patients and South African Apartheid race classifications); a description of the use of the Nursing Intervention Classification (NIC) to make visible what professionals do; and a concluding theoretical discussion of changing the practice of classification. In this review I will consider the book’s significance in a broad sense and how the authors’ observations on non-library classifications and their critical and theoretical approach relate to library and information studies (LIS).

The most important contribution of *Sorting Things Out* is its authors’ explanation of the significance of classifications as part of the infrastructure of peoples’ lives. Bowker and Star are explicit about their moral and ethical agenda. They use what I would call a “worst-case study” methodology, a cross between “worst-case scenario” and “case study,” using the most obviously problematic cases to highlight problems that are then visible in more subtle forms in everyday cases. Thus,