

Structures for Organizing Knowledge: Exploring Taxonomies, Ontologies, and Other Schemas.

By June Abbas. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2010. 249 p. \$85.00 soft-cover (ISBN 978-1-5557-0699-9).

The stated goals of *Structures for Organizing Knowledge: Exploring Taxonomies, Ontologies, and Other Schemas* are to examine how people organize information in personal and professional contexts; to explore the roles of categories, taxonomies, and other structures in that work; and to understand the human organizing behaviors that should guide the design of useful information structures (xv–xvi). The book is intended both for students and scholars studying information organization and for information professionals seeking inspiration for and insight into the design of organizational structures. In keeping with its potential use as a textbook, each chapter begins with a summary statement of themes and concludes with a set of “thought exercises.” Along the way, readers are directed to other sources for more in-depth treatment of particular topics.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 studies the traditional structures used to organize information, including both structures used to describe particular resources (such as the MARC record) and those used to organize concepts ranging from the very general to the highly specific. Abbas’s account of the familiar tools of library science—subject lists, controlled vocabularies, classification systems, etc.—is followed by an analysis of classification systems developed in the natural sciences and by a discussion of cognitive science’s reformulation of categories as structures based on the observers’ variable perceptions of “family resemblances,” and not simply on a binary logic of sameness and difference. Part 1 also covers the standards environment responsible for developing and maintaining many of the traditional structures and the

importance of guidelines for application of standards-based structures. Part 1 accounts for roughly 60 percent of the text, which reflects the diversity, depth, and complexity of traditional organizing practices in the various disciplines examined.

Part 2 examines the ways individuals organize information in personal and professional settings. The author reviews research in both areas, noting such interesting findings as the limited effort people devote to organizing their own information space, the tendency of that space to be occupied by unintentional accumulations, and the importance of intended use and frequency of use to personal classification decisions. Abbas notes a preponderance of studies of how successfully people adapt to new organizational design prototypes, but a lack of research “into how people organize their paper-based and digital information” (167) and the absence of such supplied structures. Research into “the structure(s) we employ for organizing personal information in both work and nonwork environments may reflect how we conceptually think about and structure the routines, tasks, projects, etc., that we are engaged in on a daily basis and over a lifetime” (162). This quest for a deeper understanding of the “natural” organizational impulses of human beings is a running theme of the book. Yet “natural” behavior is perhaps not a major driver for some organizational behavior. More might have been said about the additional factors that come into play when structures for information organization are intended to be built and shared by communities.

Part 3 turns to the emerging study of socially based knowledge-organization tools, including LibraryThing, Flickr, and YouTube. The structures examined in this section include user tags, social bookmarking, folksonomies, and others, deployed in different combinations by different Web 2.0 applications. As user choices accrete

in these environments, they drive the development of community preferences for particular models of terminology and socially based ranking. Yet the advantages of flexibility can be offset by the disadvantages of inconsistency and lack of consensus. Abbas observes that while the studies in part 3 “provide us with a window into how people naturally will organize objects in their personal knowledge spaces,” they do not reveal “the structures people prefer for organizing objects” within these spaces (200).

In the last two chapters, Abbas explores how insights from the three areas discussed might be combined to provide a basis for designing more flexible and useful organizing structures. She notes that while the tools of socially constructed knowledge organization have been introduced into such traditional structures as the online catalog, little empirical evidence has emerged to prove that users find this combination useful and that further research into the management of tags and folksonomies is needed. She also argues for giving more attention to a fourth “thread” in the pattern being woven, highlighting not just the structures of socially based information, but their participatory aspect and value as users’ voices engage with providing new contexts for understanding information objects.

In her Preface, Abbas writes,

The book is not meant to be a “how-to” guide for developing, applying, or implementing structures for organizing knowledge; rather, it is designed to present a conceptual discourse and to inspire thinking about taxonomic behavior, or how and why people organize knowledge, in various contexts. (xix)

Structures for Organizing Knowledge succeeds on these terms, providing both a thoughtful survey of

research findings and a stimulating complex of issues to ponder. Inevitably, some topics are slighted; for example, relatively little is said about the potential of the Semantic Web and open linked data as a new structural model for organizing information. This does not detract from the valuable contribution Abbas makes in this book to the study of knowledge organization.—*Stephen Hearn (s-hear@umn.edu), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis*

Starting, Strengthening and Managing Institutional Repositories: A How-To-Do-It Manual. By Jonathan A. Nabe. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2009. 169 p. \$85.00 softcover (ISBN 978-1-5557-0689-0). How-To-Do-It Manuals.

Starting, Strengthening and Managing Institutional Repositories: A How-To-Do-It Manual is a practical guide that combines lessons and expertise of early institutional repository (IR) implementers. The book can be read straight through or consulted chapter-by-chapter as needed. Each chapter is clearly written, contains a bibliography, and can stand on its own.

The book has two parts. The first seven chapters, written by Nabe, cover all aspects of IRs, from why libraries should adopt them through assessment. The second part of the book consists of seven chapters by authors who provide their own perspectives on IR management. Both parts work well together to form a cohesive, strongly written whole.

In part 1, the introduction and first chapter define IRs and explain why libraries should adopt them. These sections provide useful background for people who are not familiar with IRs.

Chapter 2 covers planning. One of the recurring themes in the book—avoiding too much planning—is introduced on page 13:

Inability to address these issues should not stymie all progress, and overplanning

can lead to frustration and gridlock. Furthermore, there is no demonstrable correlation between the resources committed to these ancillary activities and the success . . . of an IR.

Chapter 3 covers the major IR platforms and provides criteria for evaluation. Even if one's institution already has an IR, understanding the benefits and limitations of the software options is helpful to better understand the structure of other IRs. Because software features continually improve, this chapter should be used in conjunction with websites about each of the products.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of policies that should be in place for an IR. It gives examples from several institutions, encouraging new repository administrators to learn from the early adopters. Adapting another institution's policy is a great time-saver when starting an IR program.

The next chapters cover marketing, recruitment of content, and collection development. The author gives a realistic picture of the difficulty in recruiting content. He also provides good information regarding how to communicate with faculty and researchers about how the repository can fulfill their needs.

The last chapter of part 1 covers use and assessment. Increasing the use of one's IR relies on making content discoverable in search engines, often through the use of interoperable metadata. Some of the information conveyed in this chapter is slightly out-of-date (e.g., OAIster is now part of WorldCat), but the concepts are still valid.

Part 3 provides expert views on topics, as well as a variety of perspectives on specific software products. While many of the issues the authors raise echo points made earlier in the book, this collection of essays also offers fresh ideas. For instance, it is

instructive to learn from these IR managers why they selected their systems. It is also helpful that the authors represent a diverse set of institutions. Most importantly, since each of the case studies represents a successful IR, readers can learn from multiple people and find lessons relevant to their own institutions.

The book only touches lightly on archiving datasets and using an IR as a publishing platform, despite the emerging importance of these issues in the last two years. The lack of this information is a minor criticism; the nature of a monograph is to capture the state of a topic at a given point in time.

Starting, Strengthening and Managing Institutional Repositories is a very useful collection of information for managers of existing repositories. It would have been extremely helpful when we were beginning our repository; I recommend it to colleagues embarking on such an endeavor.—*Wendy C. Robertson (wendy-robertson@uiowa.edu), University of Iowa, Iowa City*

Collection-Level Cataloging: Bound-With Books. By Jain Fletcher. Third Millennium Cataloging. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Libraries Unlimited, 2010. 97 p. \$45.00 softcover (ISBN 978-1-5915-8543-5).

Recognizing the disparity between time-intensive cataloging of bound-with books according to current code and guidelines, and the quick processing advocated by the "core record" movement and "hidden collections" initiative, Fletcher offers a reasonable middle ground in her book: collection-level cataloging. In this accessible and comprehensive manual, Fletcher shares her expertise while encouraging readers to tackle the challenge of bound-with cataloging. To that end, Fletcher's discourse fits neatly into the *Third Millennium Cataloging* series, which "provides an ongoing set of guides to problems of contemporary cataloging, and clarifies issues,