



Structures for Organizing Knowledge: Exploring Taxonomies, Ontologies, and Other Schema

By June Abbas

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LIS professionals use structures for organizing knowledge when they catalog and classify objects in the collection, when they develop databases, when they design customized taxonomies, or when they search online. Organizing Knowledge: Exploring Taxonomies, Ontologies, and Other Schema explores and explains this basic function by looking at three questions: 1) How do we organize objects so that they make sense and are useful? 2) What role do categories, classifications, taxonomies, and other structures play in the process of organizing? 3) What do information professionals need to know about organizing behaviors in order to design useful structures for organizing knowledge? Taking a broad, yet specialized approach that is a first in the field, this book answers those questions by examining three threads: traditional structures for organizing knowledge; personal structures for organizing knowledge; and socially-constructed structures for organizing knowledge. Through these threads, it offers avenues for expanding thinking on classification and classification schemes, taxonomy and ontology development, and structures. Both a history of the development of taxonomies and an analysis of current research, theories, and applications, this volume explores a wide array of topics, including the new digital, social aspect of taxonomy development. Examples of subjects covered include: formal and informal structures; early taxonomists and their contributions; cataloging codes; classification schemes; standards and best practice; descriptive cataloging; metadata schema standards; applications of knowledge structures; classification schemes; social networking, bookmarking, and cataloging sites; tags, tagging, and folksonomies. Thought exercises, references, and a list of helpful websites augment each section. A final chapter, 'Thinking Ahead: Are We at a Crossroads?' uses 'envisioning exercises' to help LIS professionals look into the future.

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Review

"An excellent primer on expanding one's concepts of knowledge organization, Abbas' book is important reading for library and information science students learning about the organization of knowledge, as well as library professionals working in the cataloging and metadata fields, who have both the opportunity and the expertise to revitalize knowledge-organization structures." --College and Research Libraries, July 2011

"Although primarily intended for students of library and information science, researchers in library and information science and related fields will also find this mostly theoretical and conceptually oriented book useful. In addition, the practicing library and information science professional will be able to make practical use of the book's suggestions and guidelines for organizational application...Through excellent organization and depth of coverage of the subject, the author provides the reader with a solid foundation for thinking about knowledge structures for further practical implementation." --Catholic Library World, September 2011

"This work does not disappoint and manages to stand out from the many other works in the discipline for both its thoroughness and its treatment of digital schema in the context of overall organisation of knowledge...The book is scholarly but also accessible, with many examples and illustrations provided throughout to provide real life context to the concepts described." --The Australian Library Journal, August 2011

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