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

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STRUCTURES FOR ORGANIZING KNOWLEDGE: EXPLORING TAXONOMIES, ONTOLOGIES, AND OTHER SCHEMAS

STRUCTURES FOR ORGANIZING KNOWLEDGE: EXPLORING TAXONOMIES, ONTOLOGIES, AND OTHER SCHEMAS. June Abbas. *New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 201, xxi, 249 pp.,ISBN 978-1555706999, Alk, paper, $85.00.*

From cataloging and classifying books, journals, and other media in the library and online, to developing and managing databases, to arranging files on personal computers or on our office computer networks, to sorting information on diverse websites, organization is a fundamental part of knowledge management today. But how do we organize objects so that they make sense and are useful? What role do categories, classifications, taxonomies, and other structures play in the process of organizing? What do information professionals need to know about organizing behaviors in order to design useful structures for organizing knowledge?

June Abbas' new book *Structures for Organizing Knowledge: Exploring Taxonomies, Ontologies, and Other Schemas* answers these key questions by investigating three different types of structures for organizing knowledge: traditional, personal, and socially-constructed. Using this approach, the volume explores the role structures such as classifications, taxonomies, ontologies, and other schemas play in organizing knowledge and information.

Abbas's "traditional structures for organizing knowledge," which is dealt with in Part I, includes not only the cataloging structures used in libraries, such as MARC records, subject headings, and classification schemes, but also less familiar traditional structures, such as those from natural sciences.

Accordingly, part I examines historical development of taxonomies and the current research, theories, and applications related to organizing knowledge and examines a wide spectrum of issues, such as formal and informal structures; early taxonomists and their

contributions; cataloging codes; classification schemes; standards and best practice; descriptive cataloging; metadata schema standards; classification schemes.

In addition, part I also analyzes the contributions of the structures in fields such as library and information science, philosophy, natural science, and cognitive science to organizing knowledge, and discusses how these structures have been preserved or adapted to the digital environment.

By "personal structures for organizing knowledge," which are explored in part II, the author has in mind the systems developed by individuals at home and at work. Here, the author introduces research findings from library and information science on knowledge organization, human information behavior, and human-computer interaction in terms of personal information management, and scrutinizes research in related personal knowledge structures.

Part III focuses on "socially-constructed structures for organizing knowledge," which include primarily "bookmarking and social cataloging" structures that have developed recently or are beginning to emerge as the result of individual and collaborative uses of social networking Web sites. Issues discussed in this part include social networking, bookmarking, and cataloging sites; tags, tagging, and folksonomies.

The intended audience of this book includes both students of library and information science and the practicing library and information science professional, as well as researchers in library and information science and related fields. It is not designed as a "how-to" guide for developing, applying, or implementing structures for organizing knowledge, but rather as a conceptual discourse that inspires thinking about issues related to knowledge organization.

This volume is well written and is very readable for the intended readers. Every chapter includes a box of focus points, figures that illustrate the structure in the chapter, a conclusion,

thought exercises, references, and a list of helpful websites. There is also an index of tables, figures, names, and terms used in various chapters, which creates a web of cross referencing links to various chapters in the book. This makes the material more accessible to the intended academic and research audience, and thus greatly assists them in reading and understanding the issues it investigates. Thanks to these reference features, the book also qualifies as a reference book on serials management in libraries.

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