Exploring Ontologies and Their Value to Information Professionals
Amy Van Artsdalen, IGP, CRM

Practical Ontologies for Information Professionals, according to author David Stuart, is useful reading for information professionals in libraries and other institutions who work with digitization projects, cataloging, classification, and information retrieval. The book explores the use of ontology as a means to represent knowledge and information through semantic relationships. The book moves the reader from concept to concept, each laying the foundation for the next, within its seven chapters.

Understanding Ontologies
Chapter one begins with a comparison between two common definitions of ontology. Stuart cites P. Harpring and T. R. Gruber, the co-founder of Sir, as “… a formal representation of knowledge with rich semantic relationships between terms.” By defining ontology in the first chapter a foundation is laid, making sure the reader understands the use of the term and discussing how ontologies can be used to successfully manage the voluminous amounts of data and information generated today.

In chapter two, the book delves deeply into ontology, the semantic web, and linked data. Stuart provides a great example of the semantic web by including a link to the Google Knowledge Graph. The Google Knowledge graph provides a way of understanding the functions of the Google search engine and its ontology, assisting users in their search and providing related information to enhance research.

Chapter three addresses semantic web ontologies that are widely used today and points out that more are being developed. Much of this chapter is written using acronyms, which, for the most part, are listed and defined in the index. A useful table in this chapter provides a list of Dublin Core Terms properties and architecture Thesaurus (AAT) www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat as an example of a readily available vocabulary tool. Exploration of existing ontologies may prove useful for those seeking ways to leverage building a vocabulary from existing libraries.

If an existing ontology does not meet the need, chapter five provides the methodology to build a custom ontology and suggests tools to use. Four suggested methodologies have been organized into a logical table. Additionally, the four methodologies are combined into 12 steps, which include scope, software, terms and definitions, and implementation, to name a few. This chapter ends with an example that illustrates the use of the 12-step methodology.

A tool to query and interact with ontologies is the subject of chapter six. Stuart states that “Ontologies, and the associated instance data, are generally interrogated for one of three reasons: to determine whether an ontology is suitable for reuse; to extract information from an ontology; and to gather information about an ontology’s use.” In this chapter, the author provides a list of common query tools such as SPARQL, DBpedia, and the use of semantic web crawlers.

The future of ontologies is the subject of chapter seven. According to Stuart, “The way we represent, publish, and retrieve data will continue to change as new technologies emerge.” This chapter illustrates challenges experienced by library and information management professionals.

Identifying Value, Flaws
The intended audience for this book is accurate. However, the in-
Advice for Avoiding Layoffs and Closures in Special Libraries

Mo Khamouna

Before delving into this book, readers will benefit from some brief definitions of special libraries. According to the International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science, special libraries are “information resource centers located at corporations, private businesses, government agencies, museums, colleges, hospitals, associations, and other organizations with specialized information needs.”

The Encyclopedia of Library History says “Having roots in the ancient and medieval periods, these libraries tend to be wholly centered on the total information needs of their users.” It describes special library users as those “who are most often engaged in highly specialized projects that require unique sources and services.”

This volume is authored by two well-qualified scholars and veteran librarians, James Matarazzo, Ph.D., who is dean and professor emeritus at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College, and Toby Pearlstein, Ph.D., who is a retired director of global information services for Bain & Company Inc., a strategic management consulting firm.

Assault on Libraries

Matarazzo and Pearlstein write about how since the financial debacle of 2008, libraries often are the first target for deep budget cuts. Although financial difficulty is experienced by all types of libraries, this book presents case studies of corporate libraries facing reductions in personnel and even closure.

These financial issues are compounded by the assault from the digital world. The printed page as the norm has given way to many other formats, such as electronic books, CDs, and DVDs, further threatening libraries.

Users have also changed in that they usually perform their own

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Special Libraries: A Survival Guide

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Information searches, without regard to the value of information they find. In this knowledge economy, they also want immediate access to information, seeking digital downloads, which are easy to find and inexpensive but may be of questionable validity.

Advice for Special Librarians

The authors stress that in times of financial difficulty, special libraries