

IN REVIEW

Exploring Ontologies and Their Value to Information Professionals

Amy Van Artsdalen, IGP, CRM

P *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.

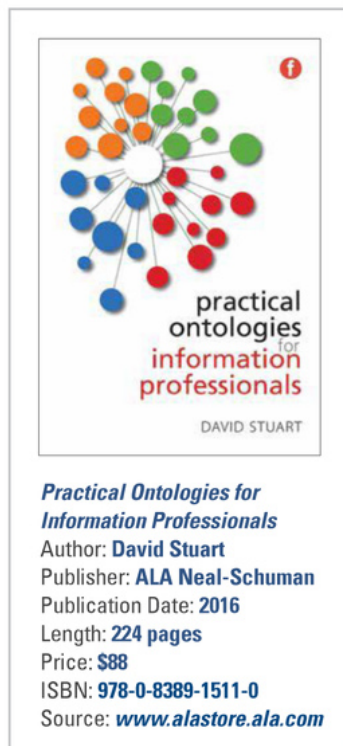
Understanding Ontologies

Chapter one begins with a comparison between two common definitions of ontology. Stuart cites P. Harpring and T. R. Gruber, the co-founder of Siri, 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



provides information governance professionals an organized view of Dublin Core as a quick reference.

Adopting, Building, Using Ontologies

Adopting ontologies, discussed in chapter four, considers the reuse of well-established ontologies, which integrate systems, saving costs and ensuring interoperability. Stuart includes a link to Getty's Art & Archi-

ecture 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-

formation contained may also prove useful for those trying to increase organic search through the use of vocabularies and the semantic web, as well as those trying to define taxonomies for the organization of information.

Throughout the book the copious use of acronyms proved challenging, as the reader would have to make notes or repeatedly consult the index. A number of undefined acronyms, such as URI, were not spelled out in the text or in the index, causing the reader frustration. The book, at 184 pages, has a six-page, two-column index and a 13-page bibliography. More thorough editing would have resulted in the elimination of blurry graphs and charts, which were difficult to read and provided little value.

As information professionals, understanding ontology, search, vocabularies, and interrelated information will enhance and facilitate knowledge as we continue to work with larger data sets than ever before. As noted on the back cover, this book meets the goal of being an accessible introduction and exploration of ontologies and demonstrates their value to information professionals. **E**



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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.

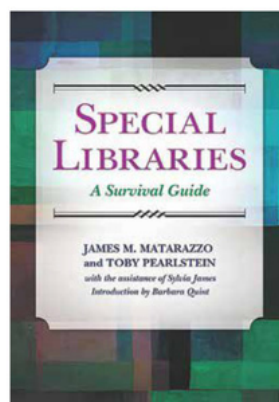
Assault on Libraries

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



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