The Intellectual Foundation of Information Organization (Digital Libraries and Electronic Publishing)

By Elaine Svenonius

The Intellectual Foundation of Information Organization (Digital Libraries and Electronic Publishing) By Elaine Svenonius

Instant electronic access to digital information is the single most distinguishing attribute of the information age. The elaborate retrieval mechanisms that support such access are a product of technology. But technology is not enough. The effectiveness of a system for accessing information is a direct function of the intelligence put into organizing it. Just as the practical field of engineering has theoretical physics as its underlying base, the design of systems for organizing information rests on an intellectual foundation. The subject of this book is the systematized body of knowledge that constitutes this foundation.Integrating the disparate disciplines of descriptive cataloging, subject cataloging, indexing, and classification, the book adopts a conceptual framework that views the process of organizing information as the use of a special language of description called a bibliographic language. The book is divided into two parts. The first part is an analytic discussion of the intellectual foundation of information organization. The second part moves from generalities to particulars, presenting an overview of three bibliographic languages: work languages, document languages, and subject languages. It looks at these languages in terms of their vocabulary, semantics, and syntax. The book is written in an exceptionally clear style, at a level that makes it understandable to those outside the discipline of library and information science.

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Editorial Review

Review

This book is learned, well thought out, finely proportioned, and timely. There is nothing quite like it available, in that it lucidly covers the full range of current bibliographic systems at a theoretical level.

(Howard White, Professor, College of Information Science and Technology, Drexel University)

This book is a highly significant contribution to the field. Most books on information organization focus on how-to and rules at the expense of the underlying principles. This book successfully synthesizes a diverse literature into coherent and understandable principles.

(Edward T. O'Neill, Consulting Research Scientist, OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.)

The Intellectual Foundations of Information Organization is a dense, intellectually rigorous, and well-written book.... A major contribution to the field of cataloging.

(*Journal of the Association for History and Computing*)

This book provides sound guidance to future developers of search engines and retrieval systems. The work is original, building on the foundations of information science and librarianship of the past 150 years.

(**Barbara B. Tillett**, Director, ILS Program, Library of Congress)

About the Author
Professor Emerita, Department of Information Studies, UCLA. Professor Svenonius' research continues to be in the area of bibliographical control, including cataloging, classification, and indexing. Her particular focus has been on the design and evaluation of cataloging systems and documentary languages in the automated environment, and she is currently conducting an analytic study of rule types used in the AngloAmerican Cataloging Code in conjunction with developing a hypertext interface for the Code.

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