



Knowledge without Boundaries: Organizing Information for the Future

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Over the course of the last twenty years, cataloging has undergone many changes designed to accommodate the description of a wide variety of resources. Library catalogs are no longer limited to holdings in a specific location or in a specific physical format but now include electronic resources and links to resources in remote locations, a fact which is revolutionizing the purpose of the catalog as well as the role of the librarian. As a result, librarians find themselves accepting new responsibilities as knowledge managers, dealing with far more than the traditional physical resources of the past and also providing access to a host of materials ranging from manuscripts, printed texts, music, maps, graphic materials, sound recordings and audiovisual materials to three-dimensional objects and digitized and electronic resources. With the advent of the Internet and electronic publishing, librarians have increasingly been called upon not only to provide access to networked resources and information, but also to organize the universe of electronic information and resources outside of the library. In this capacity, librarians have contributed their information-organizing expertise to the development of metadata standards, applying the lessons learned in more than a century of developing uniform rules and standards for bibliographic control of library materials and developing systems to exchange bibliographic data.

By participating in the development of metadata standards, librarians not only help bring order to the chaos of networked information, but also ensure that they will be able fulfill the new roles expected of them in an Internet age. By adopting metadata for use in library retrieval tools, librarians gain the means to enter into collaborative projects with other information-bearing institutions while improving access to digital objects and electronic data in their own library collections.

The papers in this volume, written by renowned cataloging and metadata experts, cover a wide range of topics of interest to twenty-first century knowledge managers, from metadata interoperability to use of library authority files as building blocks for the Semantic Web to the progress of digital libraries in China. These papers are essential reading for anyone with an interest in the new role of librarians in the digital age.

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