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Book Review: The Discipline of Organizing, by Robert J Glushko

From the student perspective, *The Discipline of Organizing* hits a sweet spot, balancing thoroughness and comprehensibility. In library school at UNC-Chapel Hill I took a version of the class that this book is meant for--"INLS 520 - Organization of Information", one of the most interesting courses I took in the UNC program--but was struck by just how disorganized the field of study was. We read through the main journal articles, tinkered with some coding, and tried to apply the (often very abstract) concepts we learned to a broad set of LIS issues. However, I often found myself struggling to understand the seemingly artificial distinctions in terminology and practice between library and archives and that of other fields.

In that class I got brief glimpses of the importance of organization of information, but it wasn't until I read through *The Discipline of Organizing* that I really saw the big picture and appreciated the broad reach of these principles. The most valuable aspect of this book, to me, is its deliberate and effective weaving together of theory, practice, and vocabulary from a wide variety of fields; the book explains application in specific areas of practice (and the examples are great!), but helps one avoid getting sidetracked with things that are often distinctions that are without a difference. I can't speak to more advanced study, but for someone who is still just getting his feet wet, this book is exactly what I needed.

Finally, it helps that the book is well written, well edited, and takes great pains to practice what it preaches--organization with a purpose. The index, notes, glossary, and overall structure of the text make it easy to find what you are looking for without getting hung up on the conventions of specific format (whatever that may be, as a print book, e-book, and the companion website) in which it is published.