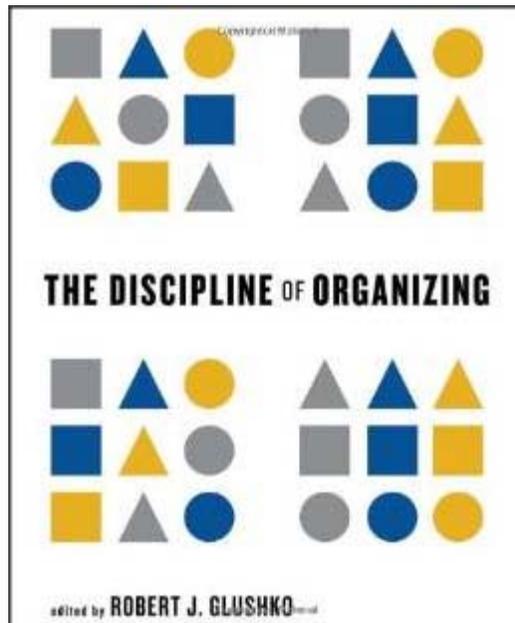


Review by **Somsak Sriborisutsakul**

<http://somsak-culibsci.weebly.com/book-talks>



Glushko, Robert J., ed. *The Discipline of Organizing*. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-262-51850-5; 540 p.

There are many new types of information resources created in cyberspace that need to be organized for the purposes of accessing and using these resources later on. Approaches of cataloging and classification have been evolved over the years into the organization of information which are aligned with the management of digital assets. Terms, concepts, and techniques from other disciplines in relation to the cataloging and classification in the LIS field have been widely accepted among our profession, for instance, metadata, ontology, taxonomy, tagging, and so on. In fact, some of these emerging areas of study are not totally new to information professionals who are traditionally responsible for organizing information resources. Some emergence seems rather to be the rediscovery of the LIS wheel (Lancaster, 2003: x).

However, for me, several newborn concepts are full of technology-based methods (e.g. automatically generated metadata and machine learning approaches to tagging), so that they become a perfect complement to the advancement of information organization. Today, we are adapting interesting theories from other domains including computer science, cognitive science, law, and business to suit the particular features and needs of the organization of information (see 'Structures for Organizing Knowledge: Exploring Taxonomies, Ontologies, and Other Schema' by Abbas (2010) for example). Such adaptation leads to the diversity and complexity of multiple paradigms in the contexts in this study area. As the area matures, many academics and experts start making inroads into the development of conceptual frameworks for the discipline of information organization.

'The Discipline of Organizing' edited by Robert J. Glushko is an original book of making an

attempt to draw upon the most applicable and worthwhile concepts of organizing, analysis, and design of information resources or collections. It is a collaborative effort by all the seven principal authors and 11 content contributors synthesizing vitally important aspects of information organization and retrieval, i.e. the two disciplines of LIS and computer science, on the basis of their different backgrounds — anyway many of them are the previous postgraduates in information management and systems program at the University of California, Berkeley. I personally give Glushko credit for editing and combination of various chapters of the book. He tries to establish every essential part of information organization and retrieval topics within his conceptual framework for organizing systems.

This book begins with all foundations for organizing systems that explain a broad outline of merging the LIS content with ideas from other fields of study contributing to the discipline of information organization. According to the book editor, the Organizing system is defined as ‘an intentionally arranged collection of resources and the interactions they support’ (The Discipline of Organizing, 2013: 1-2). The first chapter also gives an overview needed to understand, ranging from the boundary to design decisions in organizing systems. The remaining chapters of the book unfold concepts, issues, and methods as follows:

Chapter 2	Activities in Organizing Systems
Chapter 3	Resources in Organizing Systems
Chapter 4	Resource Description and Metadata
Chapter 5	Describing Relationships and Structures
Chapter 6	Categorization: Describing Resource Classes and Types
Chapter 7	Classification: Assigning Resources to Categories
Chapter 8	The Forms of Resource Descriptions
Chapter 9	Interactions with Resources
Chapter 10	The Organizing System Roadmap

Each chapter had seven distinctive features added: 1) brief table of contents including page numbers 2) important terms linked to Glossary that correspond to the boldfaced words in the chapters 3) grey boxes clarifying the fundamental principles with practical application 4) useful figures and tables 5) excerpts from handbooks as examples 6) key points as summaries at the end of each chapter, and 7) special endnotes sections of every chapter. For the last feature, I admire Glushko again for dividing the endnotes into six types to help book audience from different academic programs understand the different organizing disciplines. Those types include general citations and five domain-specific citations — LIS, computing, cognitive science, law, and business.

For me, highlights of the book show in the two final chapters. Chapter 9 provides a new explanation of interactions with resources in different information organizations or settings such as libraries, museums, and retail supply chains. Other issues — determination, resource organization, implementation and evaluation of interactions — are also discussed in this chapter. I think that its all co-authors apply the design-science paradigm to develop an innovation of organizing systems from several information environments in a practical way.

In Chapter 10, I am interested in four case studies which are reported as examples of the

roadmap or the organizing system lifecycle. It consists of five big questions to be answered when arranging both physical and digital resources:

- What is being organized?
- Why is it being organized?
- How much is it being organized?
- When is it being organized?
- How (or by Whom) is it organized?

The cases embrace a multigenerational photo collection, knowledge management for a small consulting firm, Japanese farms looking to the cloud computing, and single-source textbook publishing. At the end of this chapter, the book audience are invited to write their own case studies and share their experiences of organizing on the website:

<http://disciplineoforganizing.org/>

Overall, this book offers some fresh insights into integrative knowledge of information organization and retrieval. Glushko, as the editor, endeavors to create the discipline of organizing systems from two domains, i.e. LIS and computer science although I sense that he tends to compose this masterwork by emphasizing the latter more obviously than the former. It is not surprising because he has had a background in computing systems for many years. His previous work written with Tim McGrath (2005) 'Document Engineering: Analyzing and Designing Documents for Business Informatics and Web Services', as well as the latest book reviewed here, undoubtedly reflects his considerable expertise in information systems and service design.

### **References**

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