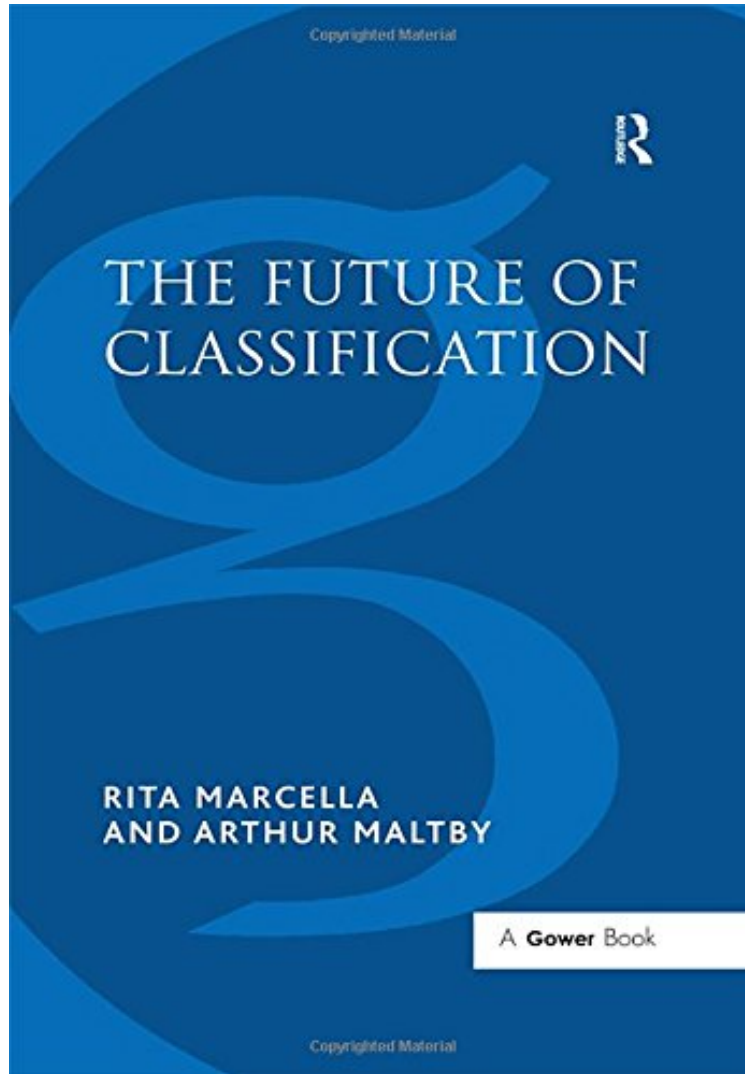


(Download pdf ebook) The Future of Classification

The Future of Classification

Rita Marcella, Arthur Maltby

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Rita Marcella, Arthur Maltby : The Future of Classification before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Future of Classification:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Too traditionalBy Birger HjrlandThis book contains a collection of essays on classification most of which are written by rather well-known contributors. Overall the book is a disappointment and points to problems in library and information science (LIS) as a research field. Classification is often regarded as one of the core subdisciplines of the field and as one of the core qualifications of library and information professionals. Nevertheless, no classification researchers are today visible in bibliometric maps of LIS (e.g. White McCain, 1998)! One of the problems in this book is that it fails to define classification and to distinguish

between different kinds of classification. By only considering systems like Dewey, LC and faceted classifications, it fails to consider, for example, bibliometric approaches in LIS as kinds of classifications and thus to consider the basic strengths and weaknesses of different methods of classification. In computer science the term "ontologies" is very popular and can be considered a modern development in classification research. Vickery (1997) made a useful introduction to this research, but it is not considered in the present book. If the electronic environment is to be fully considered, one needs to compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of all kinds of subject access points (cf., Hjørland Kyllèsbech Nielsen, 2001). One has to consider what utility-if any-classification codes can have in relation to all other kinds of access points. In Chapter 3 Julian Warner actually does take a step toward considering inherent weaknesses in current approaches to Information Retrieval (IR), and this chapter was in my view the best one. I think he is right in making the point that the IR-tradition has built on the assumption that the system should provide a set of records that satisfy a query. What an IR system in his view should do is to enlarge the users' capacity for informed choice between the representation of objects in the given universe of discourse. In recent years the methods of classification and more generally: Knowledge organization has been reconsidered. Hjørland Albrechtsen (1999) claimed that the four basic methods are respectively empiricist, rationalistic, historicist and pragmatic. If one uses, for example bibliometric methods, one applies an empiricist method. The best representatives of the rationalist method are the faceted classifications. An example of the importance of historicist methods are given in Hjørland (2000) considering the classification of the social sciences. An unfolded comparison of all methods used in one domain is given in Hjørland (1998). In my view, the future of classification is connected to a combination of these four methods of classification and to the further clarification of strong and weak aspects of different methods and systems. Unfortunately, these issues are not addressed in the book, while it fails to answer the fundamental questions about the future of classification in LIS....

Classification now has to encompass non-physical media such as the Internet, yet still ensure access to knowledge held in traditional physical forms on library shelves. What does this mean for the future, and can classification cope with the virtual library? Written by a group of internationally-known specialists, this book reassesses traditional classification principles and the extent to which they provide the right basis for modern information storage and retrieval. First posing the radical question of whether classification is still really necessary, the book proceeds by emphasizing the need for systematic knowledge organization, with two chapters concentrating on classification in relation to IT and the Internet. Later chapters re-examine how present systems - Dewey Decimal Classification, Universal Decimal Classification and Library of Congress Classification - are likely to adapt, and provide a wealth of information sources for investigating the subject further. *The Future of Classification* delves deep into what makes knowledge-seeking successful. Those studying information storage and retrieval, and managers wanting to improve retrieval methods on which their service depends should read it.

'It is encouraging to see a resurgence in the use of classification in organizing information resources...this book is an excellent introduction to its achievements in the past, and its potential for the future.' *Library Association Record* 'As a collection of timely papers it is a truly valuable publication. It establishes without doubt that classification has and will continue to have a contribution to make to the bibliographic control of publications in all formats and in the contexts of both tangible and virtual collections... the book should be read by not only lecturers and students, but all those concerned with the display of collections by means of a subject criteria.' *Journal of Documentation* '... the book is extremely readable. It provides an excellent general introduction to contemporary issues in classification, and is worthwhile reading for anyone who wishes to familiarize him or herself with current developments. It is already on the classification module reading list for students at UCL, and is particularly appropriate for that purpose, covering as it does the major part of the post-graduate syllabus for classification. But it also serves as a guide to practitioners in the field, and to those non-specialists who wish to update their awareness of knowledge organization matters, or who wonder whether classification really is an out-dated method of handling information. The lists of references supporting each chapter are extensive, and again provide an excellent guide to the literature of the field...overall the book gives a very clear, comprehensive, and accurate picture of the state of play in the field of Classification. It confirms the notion that Classification does indeed have a future, and must be essential reading for all who have an interest in this subject.' *Library and Information Research News* '...an interesting and imperative evaluation of where and how classification fits into the changing world of information organization, management, retrieval and dissemination...*The Future of Classification* is complete, concise, and up-to-date. It is a particularly useful resource for anyone interested in the modern challenges facing the means by which intellectual property is organized. In the modern world it is imperative that the place and appropriateness of classification for both physical and virtual forms of information are evaluated and assessed. In this way, *The Future of Classification* is a valuable contribution - a needed testament to the rapidly changing world of information access.' *Library Collections, Acquisitions and Technical Services (New Zealand)* About the Author Rita Marcella, co-author with Robert Newton of *A New Manual of Classification*, also published by Gower, is Reader and Deputy Head of the School of Information and Media at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, UK. She

became a lecturer at the university after working as a cataloguer and classifier in an academic library. Now retired, Arthur Maltby was formerly, amongst other posts, head of a university information studies department and an adviser on education and libraries at the Scottish Office. He has written or edited nine other books and numerous articles on topics as diverse as information retrieval, Irish history and Shakespeare.