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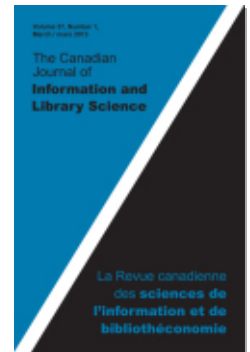
Logic and the Organization of Information by Martin Frické
(review)

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This pragmatic, readable, and frequently humorous guide will be of interest to practitioners in any library or information environment. It will also be a valuable resource to LIS educators who wish to include a discussion of negotiation strategies in collections management or organizational management classes.

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Martin Frické. *Logic and the Organization of Information*. New York: Springer, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4614-3087-2. US\$99.00.

Associate professor Martin Frické's thesis is, "Make greater use of Symbolic Logic. It can bring a unification and improvement to organization" (p. 18). According to his faculty Web page, logic and librarianship has been one of his research interests since 1990. In chapter 1, he explains why librarianship needs logic: A massive amount of digital information exists, and existing approaches to organization and retrieval cannot meet users' needs. Using symbolic logic, computers can aid, but not replace, librarians with cataloguing; computers cannot understand natural language or semantically categorize things.

Chapter 2 introduces a technical discussion of data structures and algorithms. In chapter 3, Frické explores catalogues, inventories, and encyclopedias, citing Plato, Aristotle, Francis Bacon, and others. Chapter 4 provides a cogent argument: Existing library systems use logic. He then states, "The logic we need is First Order Predicate Calculus" (p. 122), and refers readers to the appendix for an introduction to First Order Predicate Calculus. Without requisite knowledge, this appendix is challenging. Regardless, he assumes readers' understanding of the topic as he demonstrates the use of symbolic logic for classification. Chapter 5 reviews Aristotelian hierarchies, facet analysis, and other familiar classification staples. Chapter 6 discusses topic annotation techniques such as subject headings or thesauri, but he states, "[W]e favor ordinary First Order Predicate Logic as the artificial language of topics" (p. 197). Chapter 7 provides an overview of human and automated indexing, and chapter 8 skims current information organization trends such as Dublin Core, FRBR, and the Semantic Web. Chapter 9 summarizes his belief in the value of logic for aiding classification efforts as well as overcoming traditional retrieval challenges such as homonyms and synonyms.

As a scholar with classification and technology expertise, I found this book difficult to process. It is therefore difficult for me to imagine that the book would be well-received by students and practitioners, which are the target audiences for this volume, according to Springer's website. Although the book introduces concepts that are taught in introductory information organization courses, symbolic logic is the focus. In addition, it is unclear how librarians would move logic from conceptualization to implementation, especially since most librarians have little control over the classification and retrieval systems that are used in

their institutions. Frické's faculty Web page calls his interest in logic "*theoretical librarianship*" [emphasis added].

The book has no Canadian focus. The material in the somewhat disjointed chapters can be difficult to follow due to slightly incongruous presentations. It contains a detailed table of contents and a straightforward index. Both print and electronic versions are available.

As Frické rightly argues, current human and automated approaches to classification and retrieval do not co-exist peacefully, and they do not serve people well. Perhaps symbolic logic could serve as a framework for improved systems. I hesitate to recommend this book for librarians and students, but technically oriented information-organization and -retrieval researchers and developers may find it thought provoking.

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