

# Linked Data for Cultural Heritage edited, by Ed Jones and Michele Seikel

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LINKED DATA FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE. Ed Jones and Michele Seikel, editors. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2016, 152 pp., ISBN: 978-0-8389-1439-7, \$75.00.

In 2001, Tim Berners-Lee, James Hendler, and Ora Lassila proposed a Semantic Web that would empower digital devices to serve as personal assistants, negotiating health insurance red tape, personal schedules, and traffic to assist two siblings sharing in their mother's caretaking. More than 15 years have passed, and this vision of the Semantic Web is still a work in progress.

Nevertheless, during this time the conversation has shifted from vision to implementation, and the library community has joined the web community in developing linked data conceptual models and applications. *Linked Data for Cultural Heritage* brings together case studies of linked data implementations, essays that ground library linked data practice within familiar methods of information organization, and perspectives from institutional heavy weights OCLC and the Library of Congress. Accessible to those who are following the library linked data conversation for the first time, but not a low-level introduction, either, chapters from this thoughtful compilation will be equally at home on the syllabus of an LIS graduate course as on the reading list of a professional learning community of metadata, systems, and digital scholarship librarians.

The introduction by editor Ed Jones provides a concise explanation of linked data concepts, from describing resources with subject-predicate-object statements and querying these resource descriptions, to achieving five-star linked open data. Chapter 1 surveys major linked data implementations in the cultural heritage domain, such as Europeana and the Digital Public Library of America, before focusing on the Linked Jazz project. For many libraries, archives, and museums interested in getting their feet wet with linked data, the Linked Jazz project offers a roadmap for modeling meaningful connections within and across an institution's rare and unique materials. Chapter 2 uses the migration of a catalog from a MARC environment to a linked data ecosystem to demonstrate the affordances of the "agnostic" data model of linked data—namely

that the conceptual model for describing all resources need not be predetermined, but can instead expand as “new information and wholly new questions (types of information)...arise” (25).

Chapter 3 traces best practices from library organizing systems, such as controlled vocabularies and metadata element sets, to the linked data environment, illuminating where we can draw on the wisdom of our experience. Chapter 4 continues the conversation about authority control and linked data by demonstrating different methods of mapping across specialized knowledge domains through mapping vocabularies. Chapters 5 and 6 represent point and counterpoint perspectives on designing a conceptual model for bibliographic description that works with the grain of the web. Which will have the greater uptake, extending Schema.org for bibliographic description, as OCLC Research is exploring, or implementing BIBFRAME?

The primary audience of this title will no doubt be metadata practitioners and their close colleagues within academic libraries, as many of the contributions describe efforts to lay linked data infrastructure within and across institutions. Another audience, however, is digital scholarship librarians and their collaborators within the academic disciplines. Designing infrastructure for library linked data is a relatively slow-moving ship. Meanwhile, experimentation is taking place on a smaller scale as institutions publish linked datasets describing their rare and unique materials. Often librarians partner with scholars to perform these linked data experiments. For project teams whose members contribute different expertise—subject matter knowledge, knowledge of resource description—this slim volume provides a base level of shared knowledge in both the promise of linked data for cultural heritage and its design principles.

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