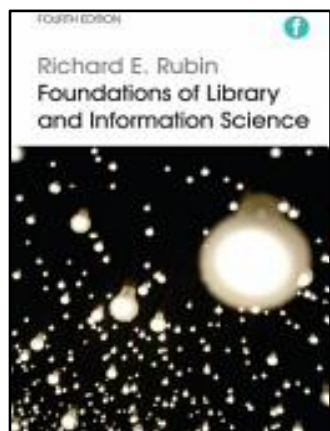## Book Review

Rubin, Richard E. *Foundations of Library and Information Science.* 4[th]ed. London: Facet Publishing, 2016. Xviii, 628 p. ISBN 978-1-78330-084-6, £ 54.95.

Over the last century the LIS discipline has developed fast and variously to hold many sub-disciplines in its fold. It is so much so that the textbook writers are engaged in writing on its specialized areas such as knowledge organization, digital libraries, Webometrics, measuring library effectiveness or library user studies, to name a few among the myriads. Now it looks that hardly anyone is interested, even competent to write a general or sufficiently advanced textbook covering the entire field[1]. Generalists in LIS field have become specialists in themselves. Therefore, this book is welcome. The fact that it is in its fourth edition (earlier editions were published in 2000, 2004 and 2013 by the Neal-Schuman, USA) sufficiently indicates its continuing value and acceptance by the profession at large. The book has been published by the two outstanding publishers, namely Facet, London and the American Library Association which endows it with a brand value and much authenticity.

This rather a voluminous text has been contained in ten logically ordered chapters starting from broader aspects of a library in its social and intellectual environment going on to the much specialized but multidisciplinary topics of information policies and intellectual freedom. In addition there are four appendices describing major library and information science associations in the USA and IFLA, listing ALA accredited library schools in the US, ALA standards for accreditation of library schools, and lastly the UNESCO/IFLA manifesto (1994) on public libraries. The text can broadly but virtually be divided into two parts. The first part of five chapters mostly dwells on library related issues. These chapters progressively discuss the knowledge infrastructure of the society, social history of libraries (mostly of the USA), and its mission, library as a social institution, kinds of libraries and their services, and the impact of technology on libraries and library services, and lastly the LIS as a profession. It views role and position of libraries in tandem with other memory institutions, namely archives and museums. This integrative approach broadens the perspective of libraries as a social and cultural institutions and as a collective social memory. Chapter 6 on the organization of knowledge fits well in both the twin fields. The other four chapters of the second part mostly dwell on information science and policies. The long

chapter on the nature and evolution of information science discusses and describes its relation with librarianship. The chapter on knowledge organization discusses up-to-date techniques and methods for information description, its representation and retrieval in the traditional print libraries and the e-environment as well. The rest of the three chapters essentially deal with information policies and its stakeholders, intellectual freedom, right to information, censorship and lastly the ethics of the LIS profession.

In the preface the author sets out with six articulated purposes, namely to provide a broader introduction to the entire field, major current issues of the discipline, place of the library in the larger social, political and cultural contexts, and to provide a guide to dwell deep into the LIS studies with the help of references and carefully selected up-to-date reading lists given at the end of each chapter. These reading lists, which have been divided by articles and books/monographs, are a very valuable feature of this text. Though mostly biased to the US situations the book is a standard work offering a broader but sufficiently detailed introduction to the LIS field in general. It provides a good reading and informative guide for the teachers and new entrants to the LIS profession world over to know and learn the scope, nature, objectives, mission and methods of the library and information services.

To be comprehensible every chapter is divided into numbered sections with apt feature headings. The text is seasoned with numerous figures and text to illustrate the concepts. Marked by clarity of thought and expression the book is encyclopedic both in scope and functions as evident from the 14-page index which in itself is a piece of high professional work. It lucidly explains and sufficiently discusses thousands of major and minor concepts, methods and issues with authority and quoting other authorities wherever needed. That is indeed a yeoman's job. The author has a knack to make axiomatic generalizations; savior a few: "Libraries of all types serve a critical function in our society" (p.157); "The information environment grows more complex every year" (p.338). And he has the insights to make wise statements "… The best way to combat a bad idea is not to suppress it but to produce a better idea." (p.491); Tolerance has a complementary relationship to truth. (p.540). And tenders practical advice, too: "Public institutions today must demonstrate their value to citizens and to funders if they expect support" (p.145). All these make the book engaging, lucid and reliably informative. May the book be kept up-to-date for generations and generations of future LIS students.

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NOTE:

[1]   Shera, Jesse H. *Introduction to Library Science.* Littleton, Colo: Libraries Unlimited, 1976.

[2]   Chowdhry, G.G. et al. *Librarianship: an Introduction*. London: Facet Publishing, 2008, 329.