of Mali. As the story of a resistance movement, this one is unfailingly fascinating and moving. There is also an undeniable element of the thriller in Hammer's recounting of Abdel Kader Haidara's life as a manuscript hunter turned manuscript smuggler. While I read *The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu* I had to suppress the impulse to cheat and to jump ahead or to search the Internet to learn how the story turned out. When I did later search the Internet for images of the Djingareyber Mosque and of the manuscripts I couldn't help but notice how the online reviews of local sites and various local guest houses mentioned in the book all stopped abruptly at the time of the invasion, showing that while IQAM may not have been wholly successful in their destruction of culture, they had certainly succeeded in terms of the local economy.

To read *The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu* is to experience alternating states of wonder and of shame: wonder at the cultural heritage of the region and shame at how little we in the West really know of this history and – worse – how little attention we have paid to the recent geopolitics of northwest Africa. Hammer's success in this book is his capacity to engage us just as steadily with contemporary politics and subsequent unfolding military action, as with the ideas and images of the Golden Age of Timbuktu. Our general ignorance of all of the above owes much – still – to the legacy of a colonialist imaginary in which Africa (posited as a vast undifferentiated continent) was rendered empty of history, civilisation and culture prior to the era of European imperial expansion. Even those with some familiarity with more recent archival history, culture and practices across Africa are still more likely to think in terms of colonial archives,[2] or the very important work that has been done interrogating the role of archives and archivists in the context of initiatives such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission[3] and beyond,[4] than of the flourishing manuscript traditions underpinning this book. There is much to learn here and a great deal of enjoyment to be had (not least from seeing the words 'bad-ass' and 'librarians' in the same title).

Notes

1. Jonathan Jones, 'Destruction of Timbuktu Manuscripts is an Offence Against the Whole of Africa', *The Guardian*, 28 January 2013, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/28/destruction-timbuktu-manuscripts-offence-africa?INTCMP=SRCH>, accessed 18 July 2016.
2. Liam Buckley, 'Objects of Love and Decay: Colonial Photographs in a Postcolonial Archive', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 20, no. 2, May 2005, pp. 249–70.
3. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (eds), *Refiguring the Archive*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2002.
4. See, for example, Carolyn Hamilton and Pippa Skotnes (eds), *Uncertain Curature: In and Out of the Archive*, Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2014, and Omwoyo Bosire Onyancha, Mpho Ngoepe and Jan Maluleka, 'Trends, Patterns, Challenges and Types of Archival Research in sub-Saharan Africa', *African Journal of Library, Archives & Information Science*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2015, pp. 145–59.

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Linked Data for Libraries, Archives and Museums: How to Clean, Link and Publish Your Metadata, by Seth van Hooland and Ruben Verborgh, London, Facet, 2014, + 249 pp., GBP£49.95, ISBN 978 1 85604 964 1

The cultural heritage sector has huge amounts of metadata about their collections. Much of this sits in isolation in institutional silos. To a limited extent, institutional metadata has been made

available for other institutions to harvest as an aid to discovery, but this is largely replication from one silo to another. Sharing and linking live data is often seen as a dark art practised by IT researchers. *Linked Data for Libraries, Archives and Museums*, by two long-standing researchers and practitioners in the field, serves as a primer for cultural heritage professionals. It helps avoid the hype of technology-driven research projects, understand the value of linked data and appreciate how it can be applied to this sector. In comparison with some other books on linked data which often present contrived and abstract examples, this book is written for digital humanities and uses real-world examples from cultural heritage institutions to illustrate concepts.

The term 'linked data' was coined by Sir Tim Berners-Lee in 2006 to describe a web of data. In much the same way as the World Wide Web is a network of hypertext documents, linked data is simply a network of data (not necessarily intended to be read by humans) about objects and even arbitrary concepts. In the context of libraries, archives and museums, it is about linking metadata about records, manuscripts, artefacts and concepts in a way that humans and machines can explore the data and discover context. The concept is simple but the application is often complex.

This work is compiled as a handbook which covers modelling, cleaning (metadata quality), reconciling, enriching and publishing linked data, with chapters presented in a logical order but which stand alone as references on these individual topics. After describing the concepts and some of the underlying technologies, the chapters conclude with case studies from institutions such as the Powerhouse Museum and British Library. Links to downloadable metadata and tools associated with the case studies are provided on the companion website (freeyourmetadata.org), showing how freely available tools can be used in the cultural heritage sector.

Despite fundamental differences in the missions of cultural heritage institutions, the book highlights many similarities that are fundamental to the sector and how these can be reflected in the underlying concepts and components of linked data. In particular, the authors emphasise metadata quality ('all metadata is dirty, but you can do something about it', p. 71), how it should be fit for purpose and the importance of controlled vocabularies so it makes sense. The authors urge taking a broader view of metadata about heritage collections and therefore how it can be used by others. They highlight some of the issues and barriers to implementation, such as the time and cost of development and maintenance. They note, however, that controlled vocabularies and ontologies are often created in isolation ('Controlled vocabularies are like underwear. Everyone thinks they are a good idea but no one wants to use someone else's', p. 109), resulting in duplication of effort between institutions and sectors.

Although many different technical concepts and methods are covered, overall the book is presented in a way that lowers the technical barriers for non-technical readers. The chapter on data modelling covers different methods and notes that each has advantages and disadvantages for describing particular types of collections, with a focus on objectives rather than tools. It does describe the relational model in more detail than others as most collection management systems are based on relational databases. The chapter on publication is probably the most technical in illustrating how to work with linked datasets in practice. None of this should discourage the non-technical reader as it is not necessary to read each chapter in its entirety to understand the concepts and benefits. Indeed, the reader can skip the lower-level technical details and see the real-world examples in the case studies and on the companion website. Conversely, the chapter on enriching metadata is probably the least technical and delves into applications and opportunities such as crowdsourcing and big data. There is some overlap between chapters, for example touching on the opportunities for using crowdsourcing to improve metadata quality, giving some examples from the National Archives of the Netherlands.

Despite the title, this is not a step-by-step 'how to'. Overall, this book provides a good starting point for understanding what linked data is, thinking about the applications and benefits of linked data, how it can be applied to cultural heritage collections and how to make metadata more useful and accessible.

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Forging the Future of Special Collections, by Arnold Hirshon, Robert H. Jackson and Melissa A. Hubbard (eds), introduction by Robert H. Jackson, Chicago, ALA Neal-Schuman, 2016, 288 pp., USD $85.00, ISBN 978 0 838913 86 4

This recently released volume is promoted as a work that offers 'More than simply a guide to collection management, this book details myriad ways to forge the future of special collections, ensuring that these scholarly treasures advance knowledge for years to come.' The editors Arnold Hirshon, Robert H. Jackson and Melissa A. Hubbard, through their collaborations with a broad and exciting range of contributors, certainly fulfil this claim. The text is an outcome of the 'Acknowledging the Past, Forging the Future' national colloquium, held over two days in October 2014. Organised by Kelvin Smith Library, presented in collaboration with River Campus Libraries (University of Rochester), Vanderbilt University and Washington University Libraries in St Louis, this groundbreaking event brought together collection specialists, including librarians, private book collections and antiquarian booksellers, from across the United States.

A recurring theme, throughout the volume, is that special collections have a rich history, yet face a whirlwind of challenges – digital, financial and institutional. How can we leverage their strengths to build a more secure and accessible tomorrow?

'Reflections on the Meanings of Objects', by E. Haven Hawley, focuses on the 'meanings of objects in special collections, especially as they relate to memory, authenticity, and social practice' (p. 3). 'Affinities and Alliances: Thoughts on Acquisitions, Collection Development, and Donor Relations', by Jim Kuhn, notes that a written collection development policy is key to having conversations about potential gifts and acquisitions. Jon A. Lindseth, in 'Where Does the Collector/Donor Community See Special Collections Today', acknowledges the need to pursue digitisation programs while arguing that retaining the original documents is central to special collections. 'Collecting Communities: The Role of Special Collections Librarians and Archivists in Creating New Life for Community-Based Collections', by Melissa A. Hubbard, expands upon this conversation around digitisation through looking at the need to develop robust platforms, facilitate linked metadata and change attitudes in our communities; ensuring communities are engaged as partners. 'The Role of the Auction House', by Selby Kiffer, also looks at changing attitudes around what is collected, with the movement away from traditional collecting towards the collecting of popular culture. Kiffer goes on to observe, importantly, that it is all our jobs to make books at least as interesting to the public as art (p. 49). Athena N. Jackson, in 'Forging into the Future: Facing Digital Realities and Forecasting Endeavours for Special Collections Librarianship', provides career insight into trends in the arena of digitisation for special collections.

Joel Silver, in 'Lawrence Clark Powell Revisited: The Functions of Rare Books Today', takes up the interesting notion of rare books fulfilling the dual role of 'entertainment and information'