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Improving Internet Reference Services to Distance Learners

Beatriz Varman
Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library Houston, Texas

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BOOK REVIEWS

Collection Management and Strategic Access to Digital Resources: The New Challenges for Research Libraries. Edited by Sul H. Lee. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Information Press, 2005. 151 p. Softcover, $19.95. ISBN: 978-0-7890-2936-2. Hardcover, $39.95. ISBN: 978-0-7890-2935-5. Copublished as **Journal of Library Administration,** v.42, no. 2, 2005.⊗

This collection brings together leaders and stakeholders in the current debate over the future of scholarly publishing, as impacted by digital formats, with a focus on the implications for research library users, administrators, and commercial vendors. Since the mid-1990s, changes in information technology have influenced the dissemination of scholarly research and user access to library resources, and, as predicted by Clifford Lynch, a "cultural revolution," initiated by physics and computer science scholars, is taking place in the health and life sciences, modeling a new paradigm for all scholarly communication [1]. In this dynamic environment, the "discovery" and "delivery" of content are the main themes of the papers delivered at the 2004 University of Oklahoma Libraries Conference, aggregated in this collection (p. 41). The user-oriented focus of these essays considers the needs of library scholars to access a repository of information and the economics of the sustainability of new business models, balancing the perspective of scholarly societies (e.g., the Association of Research Libraries [ARL]), academic institutions (Harvard and Vanderbilt Universities), and vendors (Elsevier and Gale), as well as not-for-profit initiatives such as the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and Ithaka.

The tension that exists between models of publishing is examined by Hunter, a senior vice president at Elsevier, as she challenges readers to examine sixteen "orthodoxies" underlying the thinking that led to alternative publishing models such as SPARC. The questions Hunter raises, including the eco-nomic feasibility of the "author pays" open access model and the threat of introducing bias into the peer-review process, have been documented elsewhere by Elsevier, including their corporate Website [2]. Mary Case of ARL contributes data supporting research libraries' expenditures on resources and their responses to "big deal" licensing agreements. Gherman traced from the television news archive more ephemeral "edge collections," outside of the traditional cycle of scholarly publishing, which create a "third leg of the scholarly record" and were recognized as necessary in the 1960s. Gherman's essay points to the greater need to respond to emerging technologies and their resulting content.

As Heath and Duffy chronicle the moving target that is the struggle between open access and the commercial publishing business model, they observe that the immediacy of Web collaboration and its effect on scholarly behavior and communication suggest a trend that could reshape the university paradigm itself, enlarging the conversation beyond libraries. More than one contributor noted that the 2004 conference was positioned on the "tipping point," evoking Gladwell's model of social epidemiology [3]. Several of the essays, including that of Hunter, characterize the current era of as one of "unprecedented uncertainty," in which "delivery platforms, technical requirements, and marketplace alternatives are not yet settled" (p. 38). Guthrie, Ithaka president, reminds readers that dramatic changes in information technology have occurred in the last 10 years, whereas the infrastructure has been in place for more than 100 (p. 72)! Thus, the arrow on the compass of change is still fluctuating. Is technology the "tipping point" for open access or for commercial revenues?

The volume achieves editor Lee's stated goal of disseminating the ideas and challenges addressed at the 2004 conference to a wider audience. Both the practical and philosophical issues addressed in this collection serve as metaphors for the role of research libraries themselves, both as repositories as well as "nodes," pointing the way to materials based and subsequently updated elsewhere. The footnotes and cited uniform resource locators (URLs) point the reader forward in time as the challenges of the dynamic digital environment continue to be addressed, for example, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) policy enhancing public access to NIH-funded research, which was established in May 2005 [4].

Though this text is copublished in the *Journal of Library Administration,* volume 42, number 2, 2005, and two of the papers are open access articles on the Internet, academic, science, health sciences, and library science collections will benefit from acquiring this collection in one volume. The conference essays, contributed by prominent leaders in their fields, capture the relevant issues and provide a valuable record of the challenges during this dynamic era.

Susan Kaplan Jacobs, AHIP
susan.jacobs@nyu.edu
Elmer Holmes Bobst Library
New York University
New York, New York

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Improving Internet Reference Services to Distance Learners, copublished simultaneously as *Internet Reference Services Quarterly,* volume 9, numbers 1/2, 2004, is an extensive compilation of experiences with distance learning services implemented at different institutions. The book serves as an excellent introduction and a practical guide for the librarian contemplating offering distance learning services. It includes an extensive overview and background information about the topic, while addressing specific issues such as faculty-librarian collaboration and efficiency in providing distance learning services using course management systems like Blackboard or WebCT. Librarians already providing distance learning services will also find helpful information for improving such services and will benefit from the experiences of their colleagues in this field.

The work consists of twelve chapters authored by twenty-two contributors, who are experts in their subject areas, and offers a wealth of information and experience dealing with distance learning issues. This reviewer found Markgraf's chapter, "Librarian Participation in the Online Classroom"; Viggiano's article on online tutorials for distance students; and Fisk and Pedersen Summey's discussion on marketing remote library services particularly interesting. Other chapters detail the experiences in implementing outreach and dis-

tance services at different US academic institutions, including four-year universities and community colleges, and for specialized user communities like firefighters and pharmacy students.

Markgraf discusses the importance of faculty-librarian collaboration in reaching distance students and introduces the concept of a "lurking librarian" who monitors online discussions related to students' library needs when using course management systems. This chapter also addresses the advantages of improving access for students, enhancing communication with faculty, and assessing services. Issues of privacy, technology changes, and librarians' time and commitment are also addressed, along with a discussion of key questions to consider prior to implementing a similar program.

In the chapter, "Online Tutorials as Instruction for Distance Students," Viggiano examines the effectiveness of Web-based interactive tutorials as a means of providing library instruction. It provides a compilation of thirty-four reviewed tutorials, highlighting those with content specifically aimed at the distance student.

The promotion and marketing of library services are often overlooked. These services, whether on campus or off-site, will be under-utilized if students are unaware that they exist. Marketing library services is especially important to students who do not have access to a "physical" library and may not be aware of where to go to fulfill information needs. The chapter, "Got Distance Services? Marketing Remote Library Services to Distance Learners," by Fisk and Pedersen Summey provides a step-by-step approach to start promoting these services.

This book is an excellent reference tool for all librarians, especially those considering or in the process of offering distance learning services. In addition, specific subject-related information for firefighters and pharmacy students makes this book a valuable resource in these areas. Librarians

will find excellent information on implementing distance learning services, strengthening faculty and librarian collaboration, improving access to library resources, and handling the challenges of online versus traditional instruction. The editors have done a great job compiling these articles. The content makes this book a valuable addition to any library collection and is highly recommended.

Beatriz Varman
beatrizv@library.tmc.edu
Assistant Director for Public Affairs
and Information Services Librarian
Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas
Medical Center Library
Houston, Texas

HALLAM, ARLITA W., AND DALSTON, TERESA R. **Managing Budgets and Finances: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians and Information Professionals.** New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2005. 230 p. $65. ISBN: 978-1-55570-519-7.

Understanding financial processes is essential for the effective allocation of resources to attain library program goals. This volume is a useful and practical primer for librarians new to the budgeting process. The authors—Hallam, associate dean of the School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of North Texas, and Dalston, doctoral candidate at the University of North Texas—wrote the book to fill a need for a textbook in their graduate course, "Financial Management for Libraries and Information Agencies," as well as to provide beginning professionals with a basic foundation in library finance.

This book is divided into three parts, with section one addressing "Budgeting Basics" and subsequent sections covering "Special Topics in Financial Management for Libraries" and "Alternative Library Funding," respectively. The authors begin by introducing fundamental concepts of budgeting: the various components of a bud-

get, the various budget models with strengths and weakness of each, and budget terminology. They delineate the specific steps of forecasting, analysis, and presentation and supplement the text with sample materials and examples. Chapter three, on budget monitoring processes, walks the reader quickly through the accounting procedures and billing and tracking systems necessary to monitor and account for expenditures. This section is replete with sample documents and illustrative examples, as is most of the volume.

Section two, "Special Topics in Financial Management for Libraries," addresses a range of issues that can affect a library's bottom line. Among the topics are outsourcing, protecting library property, and managing capital projects, contracts, and requests for proposals (RFPs). The chapters go into detail on issues as mundane as recovering overdue library books or as complex as planning a major construction project.

Section three, "Alternative Library Funding," addresses the challenges of supplemental funding for budgets. After giving an overview of common sources of funding, the authors present strategies and sample documents to support initiatives such as creating a friends of the library group, running a gift-giving campaign, and mobilizing library volunteers. The section concludes with a chapter on grantwriting abilities. While this overview of the grant process will certainly be instructive to novices, the twenty pages devoted to the topic will likely be little help in guiding a major grant initiative. In this, as in many other concepts introduced in the book such as outsourcing, readers with a serious interest in the topic would be well advised to seek a more comprehensive work. The book concludes with a curiously abbreviated appendix section presenting a few miscellaneous sample forms and documents.

This publication adequately acquaints those new to financial management with a broad, if superfi-cial, treatment of budget and finance concepts and is sufficiently general enough in scope to be applied to a number of different situations. The work is logically organized and makes good use of tables and sidebars but often lacks sufficient depth to have a useful application in real-world operations. A valuable feature of the book is an abundance of insets featuring sources of supplemental information, such as examples of RFPs or emergency management plans. The downside to this approach is an overreliance on lengthy uniform resource locators (URLs) connecting to Web pages that in some cases have moved or no longer exist. Despite the subtitle inferring that this is a "how-to-do-it" manual, the reader will often find this book to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, focusing on definitions and laundry lists of concepts rather than strategic insights to guide the financial process.

Terry Henner
thenner@unr.edu
Savitt Medical Library
University of Nevada School of Medicine
Reno, Nevada

Relationships between Teaching Faculty and Teaching Librarians. Edited by Susan B. Kraat. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Information Press, 2005. 182 p. $24.95. ISBN: 978-0-7890-2573-9. Copublished simultaneously as **The Reference Librarian,** nos. 89/90, 2005.⊗

Academic health sciences librarians inhabit an era of declining gate counts, fewer and fewer reference interactions, unseen patrons who access services without ever darkening library doors, and the pervasive, if sometimes unspoken, attitude that everything worth knowing is available on the Web. Externally, this attitude has sparked some questioning about the relevance of libraries and librarians to academic institutions as a whole.

Internally, the discussion often centers on the future of the profession.

Add to this the growing realization that students entering institutions of higher education may know how to play the latest computer games, use MP3 files, and absorb the acronym language of "IM-ing" simply by osmosis, but they do not necessarily have the ability to critically appraise electronic or print information. Librarians and teaching faculty see empirical evidence for the need to improve both research and information literacy skills.

Librarians long ago realized that the occasional library orientation session or tour is not sufficient to meet the needs of either faculty or students. Librarians know they can no longer limit themselves to the confines of the library. Librarians need to be an integral part of the teaching process that occurs in classrooms removed from the physical library space. The question is, simply, how? How do librarians move into those teaching roles? How do librarians develop relationships with faculty colleagues and departments that will result in collaborative teaching endeavors? How do librarians get from point A to point B?

Susan B. Kraat, editor of *Relationships between Teaching Faculty and Teaching Librarians,* has amassed ten articles on this topic that might help answer those questions. The articles can be generally grouped into two types: about half provide case reports about developing and implementing educational programs via collaboration with teaching faculty, and the remainder present the results of some interesting studies and literature reviews that might shed light on the difficulties in achieving a desired collaboration. Throughout the book, notes, bibliographies, and literature reviews point readers to previous work done in this area. Any librarian puzzling over how to proceed along the road to collaboration or hoping to avoid some pitfalls will benefit from reading these articles along with the supporting material.

The six case reports range from

the expected to the less so. Accounts of involving librarians in teaching portions of research methods–type classes would be expected in a collection of this sort, and four are here (Lampert, Toth, Callison et al., and Bhavnagri and Bielat). Each gives insight into how the collaborations began and developed and how librarians participated, as well as some lessons learned. Interestingly, almost all these collaborations were initiated by administrators or teaching faculty rather than librarians. Of the four, the Bhavnagri and Bielat article leaves a bit of a haunting aftertaste. Comments such as "faculty-librarian collaboration is a worthwhile endeavor because it significantly contributes to the *librarian's* professional development" [italics added] (p. 131) and "the faculty member had published in electronic journals but did not know how to link her articles to the Blackboard site . . . [which] was made possible by the librarian's expertise" (p. 131) give the impression that this particular collaboration was not exactly optimal.

Less expected and in some ways more interesting are the accounts of librarians grading assignments (Auer and Krupar) and librarians developing a liaison program (Macaluso and Petruzzelli). The latter is especially interesting in that many

academic libraries either have poorly performing liaison programs or wish to develop such a program but often have no concept of how to prepare librarians to do this successfully.

The four study articles are all very interesting to read. Manuel, Beck, and Malloy report the results of interviews with faculty members, who are all "heavy" users of library instruction, asking them, among other things, about their best and worst experiences. Librarians everywhere should read and take note of this article. Partello writes a revealing article about how librarians and library directors feel about librarians teaching classes in academic disciplines, rather than completely library-related courses. Given and Julien analyze postings to two email lists related to library instruction and give insight into how librarians feel about faculty members. Finally, Badke writes about how "effective collaboration simply is not the norm" (p. 68), discusses the differing cultures between faculty and librarians, examines previous roles modeled by librarians in an attempt to build collaboration, and looks forward. He writes:

> How many librarians will it take to move from teaching one elective course in one department to offering many elective courses in many de-

partments to including these courses in the core curriculum of departments so that multiple sections are needed for each course? The answer is quite simply, "A lot of librarians, most of whom are currently not available" . . . When it comes to the philosophy and skills of information literacy, librarians trump faculty. Teaching faculty within a department should certainly be involved in planning info lit courses and may well teach within them. But librarians, many of whom have at least a masters level knowledge of specific disciplines, must take the leadership role, because our purpose is to foster information literacy, not just to promote the subject needs of the discipline. (p. 76)

Reading this small volume, with an introduction by the editor and its ten articles, is well worth the time and effort. Librarians are on the verge of a new beginning, and success in that new beginning will depend largely on how well they learn to market their own expertise and how well they collaborate with teaching faculty in their institutions. There is a lot to think about here.

Donna R. Berryman, MLIS
berry025@hotmail.com
National Network of Libraries of
Medicine, New England Region
University of Massachusetts Medical
School
Worcester, Massachusetts