2004

From Your Guest Editor

Editor

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation

Editor (2004) "From Your Guest Editor," Against the Grain: Vol. 16: Iss. 4, Article 3.
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4384

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
From Your Guest Editor:

It's hard to believe but this is the eighth year in a row that ATG has dedicated our September issue to reference publishing. However, this year we have decided to throw in a new wrinkle. Because databases have become so much a part of reference work, we have expanded our coverage to include their place in reference publishing. In fact, Fran Wilkinson's and Linda Lewis' annual front page interview poses a number of probing questions to six academic librarians to get their opinions on "the rapidly changing world of reference databases." Topics like selection criteria and who does the selecting as well as current budget allocations, the impact on collections, and the future of open access all weave their way into the discussion. This issue also finds Choice's Irv Rockwood following through on his promise of a follow-up article to last year's "Reference Publishing: The View from Middletown." In that piece Irv talked about the obvious decline in the number of print reference works, the increasing consolidation among publishers and a perceived movement in Web publishing. This time Irv offers an update by concentrating the publisher's perspective on electronic reference publishing. Using data from a Choice online survey of reference publishers, he documents a "steady if at times hesitant and uncertain shift to electronic materials." We also have an insightful interview with George Machovec, editor of the The Charleston Advisor. TC4 is one of the few journals dedicated to reviewing databases for the library market so George sees the industry from a unique vantage point. He sheds light on the current status of database publishing and offers some interesting ideas about the future.

Of course, we have a number of articles that focus on the traditional print part of reference publishing. Karen Christensen, co-founder of Berkshire Publishing offers a personal recipe for quality in a reference book publishing that stresses three main ingredients: vision, validity, and voice. Karen's fresh take on quality makes enlightening reading for librarians as well as publishers. You won't want to miss it. Sylvia K. Miller, Publishing Director of Reference at Routledge/Taylor & Francis offers a publisher's prescription for useful reference book reviews. Having done a few reference book reviews myself, I found Sylvia's critique both reassuring and challenging. Readers of reviews will find some valuable tips on what to make a good review. Never one to avoid controversy, Dave Tyckoson will jolt a few people with his contention that print and electronic reference works are being replaced by the Web. Dave does a source by source countdown of titles once thought essential that he no longer uses at the reference desk. He and his staff are turning to the Web. While Dave still sees a future for reference librarians, he is not so sure about reference publishers.

Last, but certainly not least, we offer an article by Bob Houbeek, Director of the Frances Willson Thompson Library at the University of Michigan, Flint. Taking the administrative slant, Bob asserts that it is no longer sufficient to build good collections. New accreditation criteria call for linking library materials to student needs and this, Bob says, requires increased cooperation among reference, acquisition and collection development librarians. We are being called on to insure that students integrate library resources into their learning experience and not that, we are being asked to assess their effectiveness. It's a big job and Bob feels that it takes everyone from administration on down to make that happen.

We are proud of this issue and have put a lot into it. Provocative interviews coupled with engaging and enlightening articles arguably make this the best reference publishing issue yet. So sit back with your favorite iced beverage and enjoy.

CALL FOR EDITORS AGAINST THE GRAIN

Q: Is there a topic or topics that you think ought to be covered in a future issue of Against the Grain? Would you like to know more about a particular aspect of our world of acquisition of scholarly materials?
A: Guest edit an issue of ATG! All that's required is that you a) solicit 4-6 articles from experts on the subject that you are writing about, b) referee those articles with a colleague, c) write an introduction.

Send suggestions, input, acceptance to: <ksrauch@comcast.net>. Thanks!