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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Column Editor: **Tom Leonhardt** (Oregon Institute of Technology)
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Sul H. Lee, editor. *Economics of Digital Information: Collection, Storage and Delivery*. New York: Haworth Press, 1997. 117 p. \$ 29.95 hardcover. Published simultaneously as *Journal of Library Administration*, Vol. 24, no. 4, 1997.

Ling-yuh W. Pattie and Bonnie Jean Cox, editors. *Electronic Resources: Selection and Bibliographic Control*. New York: Haworth Press, 1996. 252 p. \$39.95 hardcover. Published also as *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, Vol. 22, no. 3/4, 1996.

Reviewed by: **Mary Robinson Cross** (System Librarian, Columbia College, Columbia, S.C.)
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All of us who work in or with a library are in the business of providing information and consequently must come to terms with digital or electronic resources. As library administrators we are concerned among other things, with the planning for, financing of, and dealing with the legal issues connected with adding electronic resources to our collections. As acquisitions librarians,

we concentrate on selecting databases and other electronic resources. As catalogers we apply methods of bibliographic control to these resources. Publishers create and vendors distribute electronic resources. These two collections of papers are important texts for each of these groups of information handlers as they provide guidance in making decisions concerning what resources to acquire, why to acquire those resources, when to acquire the resources, and how to purchase, process, present, and preserve them.

The initial paper in *Economics of Digital Information: Collection, Storage and Delivery*, "Digital Information and the Library: Planning and Policy Issues" by **Thomas Shaughnessy**, is perhaps the best place to begin the readings. We are shown how the general principles of library planning apply to planning the digital library. In "Negotiating Digital Information System Licenses Without Losing Your Shirt or Your Soul" **Barbara McFadden Allen** describes the efforts of the **Committee on Institutional Cooperation** to work with vendors in licensing policies and discusses the problems the CIC has encountered along the way. The CIC is a consortium of twelve university and research libraries with experiences that are very similar to those of consortia around the world. **Kelly Frey** in "Business Models and Pricing Issues in the Digital Domain" discusses six models for digital commerce: "free"

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From the Reference Desk from page 50

This book gives the reader a broad overview of recent feminist history and concerns. It is not, nor is it intended to be, an in-depth study. Larger libraries may choose to place it in circulation rather than reference, but *Feminism: A Reference Handbook* will be of use in high school, public, as well as some undergraduate libraries.

Contemporary Legal Issues is another handy series of inexpensive references from ABC-CLIO. It is actually a series of dictionaries covering a variety of topical legal issues. The newest addition is *Conservation and the Law: A Dictionary* by Debra L. Donahue (1998, 0-87436-771-9; \$39.50). This reference focuses on laws governing the use and preservation of natural resources, primarily on public lands, and secondarily on private lands. (A better title may have been *Land Use and the Law*.) Although the emphasis is on federal law, selected state and local laws are included. Within this scope, the coverage is thorough and the definitions are clear and well-written, while not overly technical. The individual definitions describe and explain the relevance of specific laws and cases, legal concepts, government agencies, special interest groups and individual players. There are helpful "see also" references to related definitions and a useful index. Other features include a bibliography, a brief directory of organizations and tables of significant cases, laws and regulations.

Conservation and the Law: A Dictionary is suitable for both public and undergraduate libraries. Laypersons and students will appreciate the clear and precise definitions this book offers, and faculty and professionals in the field may want personal copies for quick reference. With its narrow focus on land use, some libraries may also want to consider its companion volume *Environment & the Law: A Dictionary* (1998, 0-87436-749-2; \$39.50).

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Websites, controlled circulation models, subscription models, advertising subsidized models, transactional models, and broadcast models. As the author states, it is difficult to determine which of these models will dominate the marketplace.

"Issues and Challenges of Archiving and Storing Digital Information: Preserving the Past for Future Scholars" presents the challenges to the preservation of recorded knowledge in the digital world. Some of those challenges **Meredith Butler** lists are lack of standards used in production, impermanence and fragility of the medium, lack of documentation concerning production and use, cost and rapid obsolescence of the technological devices, user assistance due to the opaque nature of the hardware and software used to access digital resources, mutability and ephemeral nature of content, and the need to guarantee authenticity and integrity of contents and related linking items. Efforts by **OCLC**, **RLG**, **LC's NDLP**, and other groups in the preservation of digital information are explored.

Electronic Resources: Selection and Bibliographic Control, a collection of twelve papers, also begins with the idea of developing a collection policy for electronic resources. **Peggy Johnson** in "Selecting Electronic Resources: Developing a Local Decision-Making Matrix" discusses the new problems and new service implications that electronic resources present. Higher relative costs of electronic resources, costs of hardware, software and special furniture, costs of telecommunication lines, and continuing costs of service make it necessary to have formal collection policies for the systematic selection and deselection of library materials already in place before dealing with electronic resources.

Two articles caught my interest immediately — **Judith Brugger's** "Cataloging for Digital Libraries" and **Mandel and Wolven's** "Intellectual Access to Digital Documents: Joining Proven Principles with New Technologies." As a cataloger with nearly thirty years experience, I was intrigued with the new ideas for maintaining the integrity of the library catalog while providing bibliographic access to electronic resources. Mandel and Wolven prove that TEI headers and metadata work in tandem with the objectives of **Charles Ami Cutter**. Brugger gives a more detailed presentation of the TEI header. Catalogers have always thought they were the ones to unlock the secrets of the library's treasures, and today catalogers are still the ones who will adapt USMARC, HTML, SGML, and all the other new technologies to enable researchers to find the right electronic resources. **Diane Hillman** in her article "'Parallel Universes' or Meaningful Relationships: Envisioning a Future for the OPAC and the Net" predicts that catalogers and cataloging skills, selectors and acquisitions librarians will be as essential in the newly evolving world as they have been in the past. ... Catalogers will need to become as comfortable with their Internet browsers as they are with AACR2, as proficient in cyberspeak as they are in talking MARC tags. ... Catalogers will not be the first to go, but rather the ones who, when the breadcrumbs get eaten by the birds, know how to find the way." "Control of Electronic Resources in Australia" by **Giles Martin** explores the state of electronic resources Down Under. Anyone for E-CIP? See **Beth Davis-Brown** and **David Williamson's** "Cataloging at the Library of Congress in the Digital Age" and learn how by the year 2000 LC's **National Digital Library Program** hopes to have made available five million digitized images and texts to Internet researchers. For E-theses check out **Gail McMillan's** paper "Electronic Theses and Dissertations: Merging Perspectives." The ease with which theses and dissertations can be prepared by students, routed to committee members, revised and published is incredible — instant access on the World Wide Web! McMillan details the experiments carried out at **Virginia Polytechnic Institute** in electronic scholarly publishing. She includes the successes of this experiment as well as the concerns of UMI.

College Choice & Admissions: The Best Resources To Help You Get In. 2nd edition. Mike Osborn, Editor. College Information Series. Seattle: Resource Pathways Inc., 1997. 346 pages. With index. Trade paper, \$24.95, ISBN: 0-9653424-4-1.

College Financial Aid: The Best Resources To Help You Find The Money. 2nd edition. Mike Osborn, Editor. College Information Series. Seattle: Resource Pathways Inc., 1997. 259 pages. With index. Trade paper, \$24.95, ISBN: 0-9653424-5-X.

Reviewed by **Marita Kunkel** (Technical Services Librarian, Oregon Institute of Technology, Klamath Falls, OR)
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If high school counselors, college-bound students and their parents believe that there is just too much information to wade through in search of the right college at the right price, the companion guidebooks, *College Choice & Admissions: The Best Resources To Help You Get In* and *College Financial Aid: The Best Resources To Help You Find The Money* certainly prove that point and, fortunately, set out to offer help. These books won't tell you how to get into college or how to get financial aid; instead they offer much-needed guidance in selecting the most appropriate resources to provide that information.

Each guidebook reviews over 150 reference sources available in multiple formats: print, Internet Websites, CD-ROM products and videorecordings. As a bonus, each guidebook offers considerable advice on their respective topics along with the resource reviews.

Five sections in *College Choice & Admissions* guide the reader to resources covering various aspects of the admissions process. Resources are briefly described and ranked according to a four-star system. They are arranged to address specific situations (such as that of a transfer student or an athlete) or a particular purpose (writing the admissions essay, visiting colleges). This is a useful organization, although it leads to some redundancy as a number of resources appear several times throughout the book. Less useful are the two sections which select the single best resource on each of the topics previously covered. These sections, the editor explains, are for readers who are short on time or money and want to be directed to only one resource. This goal could easily have been incorporated into the four-star ranking system, resulting in a more concise and readable format. A final section provides full-page reviews of every resource, arranged by media type and ranking. This is an excellent section, particularly for librarians maintaining collections in this area.

College Financial Aid is organized similarly to its companion guidebook, with the same drawbacks of redundancy. This volume offers more information in its own right, however, in the form of introductions and appendices, along with the resource reviews. The reviews of Internet Websites are very valuable, as this is an area where the searcher may not only spend much time without results, but may also be misled into paying for information that is free elsewhere. About one third of the book reviews privately funded scholarship sources, although the editor points out that only 2% of scholarship money comes from such sources. This section is treated almost as a separate book, with its own full-page reviews of all sources mentioned. The result is that even the full-page reviews may appear twice within the book. *College Financial Aid* offers two rankings in its four-star system: one is an overall ranking; the other rates ease of use. Both of these guidebooks can be used very profitably by counselors, parents and students. Librarians, especially school, public, and community college librarians, will want to use them as a reference and selection tool. These guidebooks meet a definite need and, with just a little improvement in their organization, would deserve the four-star rating their editors apply so judiciously themselves. 🐾