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Book Reviews-Monographic Musings

Debbie Vaughn
College of Charleston, vaughnd@cofc.edu

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Column Editor's Note: My professional library experience is limited to an academic setting, and therefore I am constantly prompting myself to look beyond my college and university lens. Veteran MM reviewer **Wm. Joseph Thomas** gently reminds me of this with his take on *No Shelf Required 2*, published by *ALA*. While my mind has no shortage of ideas about eBooks in an academic setting, it is enthralling — and, needless to say, important — to consider issues surrounding and possibilities for eBooks in public and school libraries.

Many thanks to **Joseph** for his contribution to this month's column. Happy holidays and happy reading, everyone! — *DV*
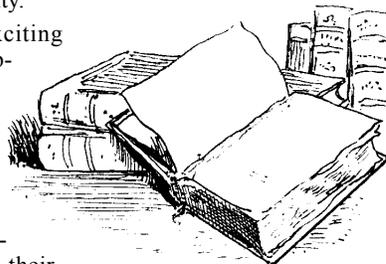

Polanka, Sue, ed. *No Shelf Required 2: Use and Management of Electronic Books*.
Chicago: ALA, 2012. 978-0838911457. 272 pages. $65.00.

Reviewed by **Wm. Joseph Thomas** (Head of Collection Development,
Joyner Library, East Carolina University) <thomasw@ecu.edu>

Polanka's *No Shelf Required 2* is an important book on timely issues. Although each of the 16 contributions can stand alone, chapters can also be loosely grouped together based on issues they address: eBooks within a broader cultural environment (chapters 1-3), technological advances that influence eBook development (4, 8), eBook collection management issues (5-7), and issues related to how each type of library might engage its users with eBooks: public libraries (9-10), academic libraries (11-12), and school libraries (13-16). Each chapter ends with a reference list, and the book concludes with an index. The first group of chapters addresses some intriguing cultural issues surrounding eBooks. "Going Digital but Not Bookless" explores a shift in thinking about libraries underpinning the place of eBooks within library collections — specifically, the transition from library as warehouse of physical books to library as a set of services supplemented by growing digital collections. The second chapter asks whether eBooks bridge the digital divide, while the third addresses accessibility issues for eBooks and eBook readers. Technological developments influencing the development of eBooks include the rapidly changing mobile environment, and the development and deployment of eBook enhancements such as multimedia files that are dynamically-linked or embedded in the text. Collection management issues are explored in chapters on eBook preservation, weeding, and how Resource Description and Access (RDA) impacts eBook accessibility.

Perhaps the most exciting ideas are addressed by public librarians, as they consider how to support local authors by developing "content creation zones" and establishing print-on-demand services. Public librarians also relate their struggles to adjust to new eBook services and providers, challenges wrought by offering e-readers to library patrons, and changes in the information industry, including controversies surrounding **HarperCollins** and **OverDrive** (also the subject of the "Spotlight" section). Academic librarians weigh the advantages and disadvantages in hosting their own eBooks and creating programs to loan e-readers. School librarians detail their pilot programs with e-readers, experiences collaborating with an English teacher to integrate eBooks into the seventh-grade curriculum, and their partnership with reading teachers to engage reluctant readers using Kindles.

Polanka introduced eBooks in her first book using an apt metaphor: the "complicated and messy" pomegranate. This second *No Shelf Required* provides further insights into the complicated and messy lives of eBooks and their place within libraries as it shifts focus from the first volume's introductory topics to second-generation concerns about managing eBooks and planning for the future. To its credit, *No Shelf Required 2* builds on some of the themes that the earlier book presented in a way that does not require readers to be familiar with the first *No Shelf Required*. Yet, *No Shelf Required 2* is put together a little too loosely; such disparate themes deserve treatment at length in other venues, especially the cultural issues surrounding eBooks. Other recurrent themes that pop up in otherwise-unrelated articles include e-reader lending and the continuing development of eBook technologies. Overall, *No Shelf Required 2* remains a recommended title for libraries.

Contributors to the current volume include school librarians and a reading teacher, academic librarians from both public and technical services, and representatives from the information industry. Among them are noted speakers and authors, including several who are active bloggers. There is only one overlapping contributor from the first *No Shelf Required*, and there is a Carolinas connection, with authors working in Winston-Salem and Wilmington. **Polanka's** other works include her highly-respected blog and the first edition of this book, *E-Reference Context and Discoverability in Libraries: Issues and Concepts* (2012), and *The No Shelf Required Guide to E-book Purchasing* (2012). 🌲

From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilsont@cofc.edu>

Sage recently released a four-volume set that seeks to clarify and define a growing field of inquiry. The *Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education* (2012, 978-1412981521, $595) addresses the "concepts, theories, research, policies, case studies, and programs" inherent in the growing efforts at recognizing and incorporating diversity into educational systems. And in doing so, it tries to acknowledge and bring to the fore the need for educational equality that is at the core of concerns about diversity both in the United States and worldwide.

Examining the Reader's Guide to entries gives an idea of the comprehensive scope of the set. Divided into 16 categories ranging from specific Alternative Educational Models to the Global Dimensions of Diversity and from Gender and Sexual Orientation to Religion in Society and Schools, the *Encyclopedia* offers close to 700 A-Z entries that address individual issues and concerns. Admittedly, the majority of emphasis is on efforts in the United States; however, the rest of the world is not neglected. Developments in multicultural education are discussed in nations from Europe to the Caribbean and from the Middle East to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Concerns about ethnic and indigenous education are covered, as are issues like xenophobia, school reform, and religious instruction.

The individual articles are clearly written,