

February 2013

Book Reviews-Monographic Musings

Debbie Vaughn

College of Charleston, vaughnd@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vaughn, Debbie (2013) "Book Reviews-Monographic Musings," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 25: Iss. 1, Article 41.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6442>

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.

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

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

Column Editor's Note: *Though Boss's Day is only observed once a year, it is always appropriate to address one's management skills through personal and professional development. Regular reviewer Wm. Joseph Thomas offers his opinion on **Library Management Tips that Work** as well as suggestions for other library management titles worth pursuing. Many thanks to Joseph for his contribution, and happy reading, everyone! — DV*

Smallwood, Carol, ed. *Library Management Tips that Work*, ed. Chicago: ALA, 2011. 978-0-8389-1121-1. 208 pages. \$55.00.


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

Carol Smallwood's latest book aims to provide "concise how-to case studies of successful managers employing innovation." *Library Management Tips that Work* partially meets this goal. Forty-eight bite-sized chapters are divided into five parts: The Manager Role, Running a Library, Information Technology, Staff, and Public Relations. Thirty contributors from a variety of backgrounds provide two chapters each, with an average of three pages per chapter. Some of the pairs of contributions are more closely related than others — for instance, the two chapters on time management, the two on avoiding discrimination, or the two

on planning for emergencies. Others, though, are only loosely related, and some do not seem to be related at all.

The chapters that work best are those that are generally applicable to any library type; these also display several themes present throughout the book: clear communication, documentation, planning, and partnership, are all necessities for library leaders. The Information Technology chapters share timely tips on deploying technology for library purposes; for example, the noteworthy "Why a Wiki? How Wikis Help Get Work Done" lays out helpful examples on how to choose wiki software, how

libraries are already using them, and how to prevent wiki "fade-away." While the sections on The Manager Role and on Staff are decidedly useful in a variety of settings, the section on Public Relations really only addresses public library directors and their boards.

Many of the chapters have helpful callouts, and some have figures, appendices, and/or references. One handy bit of advice that emerged from a call-out was the suggestion to have "manager handbooks" to ensure consistency in policies and manager actions in order to avoid discriminatory practices. This book, as another reviewer points out, is perhaps best suited for directors of small public libraries. Overall, though, *Library Management Tips that Work* is uneven. Library managers looking for practical strategies to implement in their own libraries can find them on the Web or in other published literature. For a stronger general introduction to management issues and techniques, there are other books like *Be a Great Boss: One Year to Success or Managing Library Employees: A How-to-do-it Manual*. 

Climbing the Digital Everest: The Journey to Digitize the Nineteenth Century

by **Ray Abruzzi** (Director, Strategic Planning, Gale, part of Cengage Learning)

Most may not liken digitizing nineteenth-century manuscripts and playbills to facing life-threatening conditions while climbing the largest peak in the world, but the nineteenth century was, without a doubt, one of the most exciting and revolutionary periods in our history. In many ways, it's the equivalent of the "Digital Everest" to historians, archivists, and curators alike.

When one of the earliest Everest-attempters **George Mallory** was asked the question, "Why climb Mt. Everest?" he famously answered, "Because it is there." In our case, we chose to climb the Digital Everest because, well, our customers asked us to.

And like any good mountaineer will tell you, make sure you bring the right tools and equipment and never climb alone. At **Gale**, we took this advice to heart.

The Idea and The Reality

It was shortly after **Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)** launched in 2003 that customers began asking when we would do "the same thing" for the nineteenth century. **ECCO** had changed the face of digital scholarship and there was no going back. We saw the logic and the opportunity. Eight years later, we are delivering on that promise, and what transpired in that time happened in neither the sequence nor the manner we had planned.

Soon after stating we would tackle the nineteenth century, we realized that the scope and scale of such an endeavor was simply too large an undertaking with the technologies then available. The amount of publishing in the nineteenth century dwarfs that of the eighteenth century (thanks to the steam-driven printing press, increased literacy rates, and many other factors). Existing bibliographies did not begin to cover the scope of material available. How could we approach the mammoth goal of comprehensively digitizing the nineteenth century — the books, the manuscripts, the images, the newspapers, the pamphlets, and more? Well, we didn't — at least not immediately.

Instead, we put our efforts into several other ventures. These include *19th Century British Library Newspapers*, *17th and 18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers*, *The Making of the Modern World*, and a second part of **ECCO**. These relatively smaller programs met with success over several years, and we continued to develop archives around single content types (generally either books or newspapers) until 2008, when **Gale** took another step forward with *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive (SAS)*.

SAS was launched as an ambitious five-year publishing program that relied on expert advisors to select content and on new technology to integrate multiple content types. No longer was

Gale publishing a collection of (just) newspapers, or (just) monographs, or (just) manuscripts; rather, **SAS** brought together in a single place multiple content types, and **SAS** made them all work together seamlessly. **Gale** tackled a new challenge in 2009, embarking on a plan to bring a long history of scholarly publishing via our major reference imprints, **Macmillan Reference USA** and **Charles Scribner's Sons**, together with aggregated secondary sources (journals, videos, maps, etc.). The tricky part followed when we had to match them alongside primary sources on the same scale as our existing digital archives. The result is **Gale's World Scholar** program. The first installment, focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean, was published in April 2011, after two years of groundbreaking work. *World Scholar* is a new kind of library/classroom resource that integrates more than a million pages of digitized primary sources — dating from the 15th century into the early 20th — with secondary sources and topic portals devoted to major areas of interest in Latin American studies. Following shortly will be *Gale World Scholar: The Middle East*.

World Scholar also represents **Gale's** first major foray in two complementary, synchronous methodologies of product creation: user-driven product design and "AGILE" development.

continued on page 56