2015

Briefly Noted

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COMMON PHRASES...AND THE AMAZING STORIES BEHIND THEM
— by Max Cryer (ALA Editions, 2010) — Words are perpetually taken for granted, and through them the English language has been in a state of constant evolution. Max Cryer knows this and seeks to rectify this error in this fascinating, easy-to-read, phrase history. It's hard to put down due to how intriguing the information therein is. One can likely flip open to a random page and still see a new tidbit of information. Mr. Cryer also made the important decision for accessibility; there is nothing difficult to read, and it's enjoyable to read all of it.
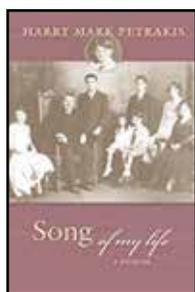
SONG OF MY LIFE
— by Harry Mark Petrakis (University of South Carolina Press, 2014) — While not a name that gets an instant recognition, Harry Mark Petrakis has been an indispensable voice in the world of Greek American literature. In this book, his most recent memoir, he seeks to look back in depth on the life he has lived in its entirety. It is important to note that he glosses over nothing. From his nasty gambling addiction to his impulsive near suicide, he makes no apologies for himself but owns up to them. Even to one unfamiliar with his long bibliography, Petrakis' story is a gripping read.

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE: A GUIDE TO KEY LITERATURE AND SOURCES
— by Michael F. Bemis (ALA Editions, 2014) — This book is more of a catalog than anything else, not that it's a bad thing. However, it only grazes the subject matter itself, instead opting to direct you, the reader, to places you could get the information that you are looking for. Outside of that complaint, it's still needed, since without the information at hand, it might not have ever been seen. This book is a bit of a niche material, but it's well made for what it offers.
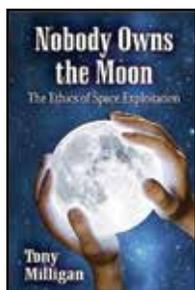
NOBODY OWNS THE MOON: THE ETHICS OF SPACE EXPLOITATION
— by Tony Milligan (McFarland, 2015) — As more of the universe is explored, it becomes clearer how many planets there are. With the new worlds comes the almost certain guarantee that life will be found somewhere. Thus a truly important question is raised, and that is what the human position in the universe is. Milligan seeks to shed some light on the ethics of this once fantastical quandary. He tackles it head-on showing that, while we as humans may feel as though we have a right to self-preservation, we need to be weary of the life we encounter when we get there. There is an underlying current of caution that not many would seek to approach, but for Mr. Milligan it's of the utmost importance: we Earthlings are not inherently the most important beings in the universe.
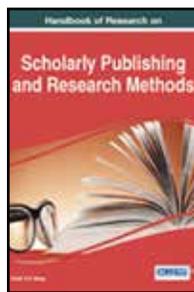
SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING AND RESEARCH METHODS
— by Victor C.X. Wang (Information Science Reference, 2015) — Mr. Wang's collection is a wonderfully in-depth look into ways for the academically inclined to further their research. It breaks down different methods, in a way that makes one feel as though it is impossible not to learn something new with each chapter read. There is, in fact, no aspect of academic research that is not touched on at least once in this book. That being said, its in-depth look into academic research and getting published was clearly designed for only a specifically inclined group of people and may be a bit difficult to get into unless one is already deeply into academic research. A must read for grad students in the midst of their studies.
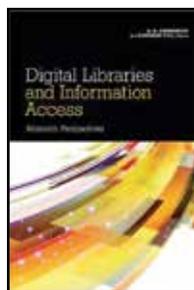
DIGITAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION ACCESS EDITED
— by G.G. Chowdhury and Schubert Foo (Neal-Schuman, 2012) — While the use of digital search engines has seen a steady growth since the Internet became a common thing, some still find it difficult to get the engines to find what they are truly looking for. The editors of this book understand that and have found many references to help alleviate that problem. This book also includes an in-depth breakdown of a variety of search problems, and offers ideas on how to make the engine work better for the user. This book is a useful reference for any information desk.
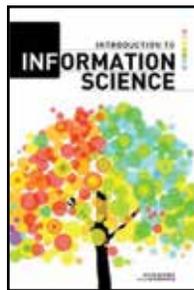
INTRODUCTION TO INFORMATION SCIENCE
— by David Bawden and Lyn Robinson (Neal-Schuman, 2012) — While many may look at the local librarian and think the job looks easy, these authors can tell you it isn't. This book gives the entire Information Science discipline an in-depth overview. It also shows that there are multiple facets within the job description, covering both the daily interactions as well as the behind-the-scenes work that is also needed. Extending from the overview that it isn't easy is the book's other point: there is a lot to do with a degree in Information Science. Definitely a book to be read by anybody looking to get into the field.
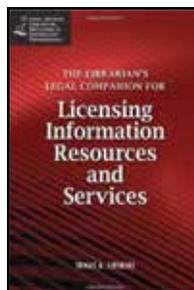
THE LIBRARIAN'S LEGAL COMPANION FOR LICENSING INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES
— by Tomas Lipinski (Neal-Schuman, 2013) — Many may not realize it, but as guardians of intellectual property rights, the law is a subject that all librarians should be up to scratch on. Lipinski's textbook is a useful piece to have in that it covers all the various ways copyright law intersects with the day-to-day life of a library. The text covers all areas of concern as well as talks about areas that many may have never considered. If there has been a point of uncertainty about whether or not a law has been broken, this book will sort it out. 🦃