

2016

Book Reviews--Monographic Musings

Regina Gong

Lansing Community College Library, gongr1@lcc.edu

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



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

Recommended Citation

Gong, Regina (2018) "Book Reviews--Monographic Musings," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 28: Iss. 2, Article 24.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.7323>

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: **Regina Gong** (Head of Technical Services & Systems, Lansing Community College Library) <gongr1@lcc.edu>

Column Editor's Note: *We've survived another winter season (thankfully a mild one for us in MI this year) and I'm sure we're now enjoying the warm-up that spring time brings. We're also probably busier as the semester comes to an end with the frenzy of final exams and the anticipation of our students marching during graduation ceremonies. I'm particularly excited to see our students graduate in May knowing that the Library has played an important role in their journey as college students.*

*Anyway, for this issue, we have an array of new books that deal with data such as **Managing Scientific and Research Data**, and the **Accidental Data Scientist: Big Data Applications and Opportunities for Librarians and Information Professionals**. Digital humanities and data curation is an area that libraries are now actively involved in and the book **Digital Curation in the Digital Humanities: Preserving and Promoting Archival and Special Collections** digs deeper into that with particular emphasis on preserving special collections. If you want to know more about competitive intelligence and how it can harness our work as information professionals, then take a look at **Competitive Intelligence for Information Professionals**. Academic libraries and especially those in administration (like directors and deans) are always struggling with staffing issues and so this book on **Strategic Human Resource Planning for Academic Libraries: Information, Technology and Organization** makes the case for strategic approach to human resources development and capacity building. Finally, read more on how to create marketing plans as well as strategies for marketing libraries in this age of social media in **Marketing the 21st Century Library: The Time is Now**.*

I have lots of books for you to review so if you want to be part of the ATG roster of reviewers, just send me an email at <gongr1@lcc.edu>. Happy reading! — RG



tumble. That is one way to look at the work associated with strategic human resources in an academic library — trying to stay upright when the world is literally moving under your feet. The other way to look at it might be more literal — that managing library change is difficult, but human resources implications are the “barrel of fun” that directors cannot avoid.

Crumpton writes a good primer on the issue of human resource issues and practices for academic library directors and administrators. This short work is well documented and provides excellent charts and tables to help anyone finding themselves in an administrative capacity at an academic library. The approach that **Crumpton** takes in exploring the world of strategic human resources management is one that any business school staffer (such as myself) could appreciate and applaud. While he cites a great number of articles and studies that focus on human resources as it relates to libraries, there are many reports and resources that are drawn from higher education and human resource management fields. This gives the work a well-grounded approach to the specific issues that library directors are facing.

If I had a wish, it would be that he provided more practical examples of the shifting nature of library work. While he addresses new job skills and titles found in academic libraries, one of the bigger issues we are facing through this change is how we move staff currently filling traditional positions into the new jobs that libraries need. Making these changes during position vacancies is far easier than moving staff and libraries at the point of need. Another wish would be to learn more about the changes at **UNCG** over the last few years as academic libraries shift focus to the information needs of current researchers. This would give a practical layer to this work that might provide good options and suggestions for library directors at similar institutions.

Overall, this is an excellent work that provides readers with a solid framework for creating a strategic approach to a library's most important resources, its librarians and staff.

Crumpton, Michael A. *Strategic Human Resource Planning for Academic Libraries: Information, Technology and Organization*. Amsterdam: Elsevier (Chandos imprint), 2015. 9781843347644. 110 pages. \$81.95.

Reviewed by **Corey Seeman** (Director, Kresge Library Services, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) <cseeman@umich.edu>

There are many challenges facing library directors and administrators these days. This is especially true among academic library directors who are feeling the pinch on a number of fronts. Between the changing needs of researchers, the growing scarcity of usable space on campus, flat budgets and the eternal question of where to house a legacy print collection, there are sufficient worries to keep directors from sleeping well at night. However, behind each of these problems lies a more difficult and delicate challenge for the library director. How can the library's workforce adapt to the changing needs of the communities we serve in a strategic and empathetic way?

Michael Crumpton, Assistant Dean for Administrative Services at the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG)**, writes a well-researched guide to help library directors better understand the important implications of their human resources decisions. **Crumpton** is a prolific author and presenter on various topics addressing the administrative needs of the library (see <https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/clist.aspx?id=1946>).

In his introduction, **Crumpton** references a “barrel of fun” that one might find at a fair or amusement park. You walk through a large rotating barrel as you move from one part of the amusement park to another. The goal is to stay upright, though many do not make it through without a

Lucas-Alfieri, Debra. *Marketing the 21st Century Library: The Time is Now*. Waltham, MA: Chandos Publishing, 2015. 9781843347736. 105 pages. \$78.95.

Reviewed by **Ashley Fast Bailey** (Senior Collection Development Manager, YBP Library Services) <abailey@ybp.com>

Knowing where to start with a marketing plan can be overwhelming. There is so much information available and so many places that information is housed. **Marketing the 21st Century Library** by **Debra Lucas-Alfieri** takes a big picture look at various aspects of marketing for today's library. She uses her experience of marketing libraries and provides a clear, concise guide that is a great place to start when gathering basic information on what library marketing is, where one should start, and steps involved in implementing successful marketing strategies for the 21st century library.

Lucas-Alfieri breaks her book into seven easy to navigate sections: history of library marketing, the market plan, how to use various marketing tools and techniques, managing the marketing plan, partnerships to promote the library, how to market and promote the library, and the challenge and opportunities that libraries today face. By taking time to break out and write in simple terms each of these areas of marketing, libraries can gain a clear overview of marketing in today's landscape and how to use practical applications in their library. In addition, **Lucas-Alfieri** also provides case studies throughout the text to illustrate these practical applications and how-to's.

After giving a brief history of library marketing, **Lucas-Alfieri** gets into the details about a library marketing plan in regards to research and

continued on page 35

assessment. By outlining several types of research and data gathering to start a marketing plan, she lays the framework for the coming sections of this book. Emphasis is placed on defining the library's mission and vision before marketing takes place, and **Lucas-Alfieri** stresses the importance of not skipping this in the process. A library must know its patrons and community including their vision and mission before marketing takes place. She goes on to provide assessment tools and ideas to use before jumping into the marketing plan.

After a library defines its mission statement, the next step is to lay the ground work for the marketing plan through assessment and research. Only then can one move on to writing and implementing the plan. The subsequent chapter outlines ways to accomplish this. Though it does not provide examples of actual marketing plans, it does a great job of defining types of plans, steps to begin thinking about creating and implementing a plan, and follow through. **Lucas-Alfieri** provides numerous case studies and questions after each chapter to help reinforce the various aspects of the library marketing plan.

Lastly, she goes into ways to promote the library through partnerships and various forms of media. **Lucas-Alfieri** brings up innovative ways to partner with the library community, mainly focusing on academic libraries, to move the marketing plan forward. Through promotion and visibility, the library can really market itself as a relevant part of the campus ecosystem.

Marketing the 21st Century Library is a great resource for someone who is starting to think about creating a marketing plan for their library, or wanting to gain a general overview of how marketing plays a role in the current state of libraries. Through case studies, well-written and clear chapters on concepts from what is a marketing plan to how to assess and manage a marketing plan, **Lucas-Alfieri** has written a well-rounded overview of marketing the library in the 21st century.

Baykoucheva, Svetla. *Managing Scientific and Research Data*. Waltham, MA: Chandos Publishing, 2015. 97800810019500. 162 pages. \$67.11.

Reviewed by **Emma Oxford** (Science Librarian, Olin Library, Rollins College) <eoxford@Rollins.edu>

Managing Scientific Information and Research Data by **Svetla Baykoucheva** presents a broad overview of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) publishing — from professional ethics to lists of helpful resources to differences in common practices and everything in between. The subject matter is more far-reaching than its title would suggest and well-worth reading for librarians who find themselves serving scientific researchers. As a chemist turned information professional with an extensive publication record spanning numerous journals, **Baykoucheva** is well-placed to provide guidance on this subject. She is currently the head of the **White Memorial Chemistry Library** at the **University of Maryland, College Park**. This is her first book.

Every chapter of *Managing Scientific Information* contains some insight or list of resources that librarians will find useful. Some of the most interesting chapters are transcripts of interviews that **Baykoucheva** conducted with various scientists and information professionals, including **Eugene Garfield**, the founder of the *Science Citation Index*, which would later become *Web of Science*. These interviews add valuable additional perspectives on research and publishing that many librarians might not have considered. **Baykoucheva** has conducted numerous interviews with professionals in the field in recent years, all of them available at <http://www.acscinf.org/content/interviews> (including those featured in the book).

Librarians will also find useful the lists of relevant Websites and organizations that appear in several chapters. For example, there are lists of publishers involved in “new models of scientific communication” (in Chapter 2), organizations concerned with ethical research and publishing practices (in Chapter 3), and online data repositories

(in Chapter 8), among others. Chapter 5 includes a comparison of several different prominent databases of scientific literature and data. The author's evaluation of how to decide the best database for a given subject is astute. She also cites several additional studies for readers interested in further exploring the subject. In fact, every chapter includes an extensive bibliography of scholarly works for additional reading.

The book's great strength is its discussion of aspects of scientific publishing that researchers and authors probably understand on an instinctual level but that librarians may not be aware of. For example, why have preprint archives been so successful in physics and gained no ground in chemistry? How might **Mendeley's** tracking of its users' research habits make some researchers uncomfortable using this citation management system? What are some of the nuances surrounding peer review in scientific disciplines? **Baykoucheva** also provides some commentary on the use (and misuse) of impact factors in judging scientific work, and authors and librarians alike will appreciate her analysis on these issues. Even **Garfield**, the creator of the journal impact factor, touches on its misuse in his transcribed interview.

If there's one flaw in this book, it is that it covers too many aspects of scientific publishing. Indeed, the book's title is somewhat misleading, since it suggests that it is about a much narrower aspect of the publishing endeavor than it actually is. Not until Chapter 8 (“Coping with ‘Big Data’: eScience”) does it get at what the title implies the whole book is about. But for the most part, this is a failure of the title, not the text. Only once or twice does it seem like **Baykoucheva** includes more information than is relevant in a given chapter.

Overall, librarians and others are likely to gain valuable insight from **Baykoucheva's** perspective as a scientist turned information professional, and this book is well worth a read.

Hakansson, Charlotte, and Margareta Nelke. *Competitive Intelligence for Information Professionals*. Amsterdam: Chandos Publishing, 2015. 9780081002063. 152 pages. \$78.95

Reviewed by **Christal Ferrance** (Instructional Design Librarian, George Mason University) <cferranc@gmu.edu>

Competitive Intelligence for Information Professionals is a quick read with a lot of substance. The authors are two senior information professionals from the competitive intelligence (CI) field. **Hakansson** is an information specialist managing business intelligence projects in several fields (pharmaceutical, medical, and business). In 2011 she founded a consulting company, **Novolentia**, which offers competitive intelligence and information management assistance to businesses, organizations, and public areas. Today **Hakansson** manages her company and also is a Team Leader Research Support for the **Swedish University's Agricultural Sciences Library**. As co-author, **Nelke** began her career in public and academic libraries but quickly moved into the corporate world as a library manager. Since 2004 she has been an independent consultant for her firm, **I.C. at Once**, which offers coaching, training, and investigations in CI, information management, and business development.

The book has 12 chapters, with each focusing on different aspects of competitive intelligence and the information professional, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the process. Chapter 1 defines competitive intelligence and its value or importance to organizations, businesses, and individuals. The authors highlight the common reasons for competitive intelligence, for example, globalization, individualization, competition, threats, IT development, and crises. However, they also add complexity (in order to make things better, new skills and tools are needed), demand for knowledge (the best information is needed, not random, unfiltered information), and common view (the whole organization working towards common goals and vision and the breaking down of silos) to their list of important reasons. Chapters 3-6 explain the PCMAC model (plan & prioritize, capture, manage, analyze, and communicate). Often the analyze phase is regarded as the most important, yet the authors claim that the plan & prioritize phase is actually the most important because it is where “the essential questions are asked” (p.25). Particularly illuminating are tables 9.1 and 10.1.

continued on page 36

Table 9.1 Ranking of competence compared to ranking of courses by Swedish recruiting agencies shows that many of the skills information professionals have or are trained in are ranked high by managers for competitive intelligence activities. However, when the word library was added to either course titles or degrees they were ranked lower by those same managers. *Table 10.1 The roles in competitive intelligence tasks and the contribution of the information professional* further drives the point that information professionals are key players in competitive intelligence initiatives. From members of the steering committee to producer of the output, information professionals are involved in every aspect. Finally, "Tools and methods" introduces various CI strategies, for example, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound), and impact analysis, to name a few. The authors describe the methods, explain the processes step by step, and offer some tips and potential pitfalls based on their experience.

Hakansson and **Nelke** want to not only give an overview of the competitive intelligence process but also provide a "toolbox" of tested methods. They strive to add real examples of CI to balance the practical with the theoretical. They also want to highlight, based on their experiences, the key role information professionals play in CI. Overall the authors are successful in their mission. Their many examples of CI processes will interest not only newcomers to the field but also those with more experience. However, more detail to the "real life cases" would have been beneficial. Information professionals as well as business intelligence managers will find this book useful.

Sabharwal, Arjun. *Digital Curation in the Digital Humanities: Preserving and Promoting Archival and Special Collections.* Chandos Information Professional Series. Amsterdam: Elsevier (Chandos imprint), 2015. 9781843347866. 182 pages. \$78.95.

Reviewed by **Jennifer Rinalducci** (Art & Art History Librarian, George Mason University Fenwick Library) <jrinaldu@gmu.edu>

Digital Humanities is an ever growing field of study, and as a result more librarians and archivists are being required to incorporate these concepts into their work. **Arjun Sabharwal's** work *Digital Curation in the Digital Humanities* addresses part of this need by focusing on the role of digital curation in archives and special collections. **Sabharwal** is currently the Associate Professor of Library Administration and Digital Initiatives Librarian at the **University of Toledo Libraries** and has a background in archives administration. He is well placed to discuss the implementation of digital curation since his primary duties include digitizing manuscript collections, managing digital repositories, and proposing new digital projects.

By focusing on digital curation, the author goes beyond the well-established discussions of digital preservation in archival studies. He sets up a dichotomy between the stagnant idea of preservation and the dynamic concept of curation. In contrast to digital preservation, digital curation provides a framework for selecting, promoting, and adding value to digitized and born-digital collections. In fact, definitions are important throughout the book, whether the author is addressing the concepts of digital curation and digital humanities or digital history and digital historiography.

Sabharwal provides both theoretical and practical perspectives on digital curation and its role within the larger field of digital humanities. This is a necessary combination given the complex nature of the subject. Digital curation allows for continued access to primary data and cultural heritage while these new technologies allow scholars and practitioners to approach humanities topics in new ways and see new connections.

Each chapter addresses key elements of the curation process, such as collaboration, interdisciplinary scholarship, and information architecture. However, the lifecycle of the digital curation process remains an overarching theme throughout the book. As a result, the author is able

to tie together the conceptual, theoretical, and practical perspectives of curation within the larger digital humanities framework.

The book provides several useful and even some unique features. A key feature is how the author illustrates the theory by discussing practical applications. The real-life examples demonstrate the larger theoretical concepts of the digital humanities. The list of references is also a valuable survey of the current literature and online tools. **Sabharwal** also provides an in-depth study of the role of social media in the world of social curation. He reviews several online resources, like YouTube, Instagram, and Storify, and explains how they can be used as digital humanities tools. Overall this book is recommended for those who want to better understand how current practices can be used to improve the curation of special collections and archives for both teaching and research needs.

Afelt, Amy. *The Accidental Data Scientist: Big Data Applications and Opportunities for Librarians and Information Professionals.* Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 2015. 9781573875110. 222 pages. \$39.50.

Reviewed by **Michelle Polchow** (Electronic Resources Librarian, George Mason University) <mpolchow@gmu.edu>

Disruptive technology continually seeps into the jobs of librarians and information professionals. "Big data" seemingly appears overnight, accelerates from newspaper buzzword into newly designed academic degrees and now frequently appears within high demand job requirements. **Amy Affelt**, writing from her position as a corporate librarian, takes the data-naïve on a compelling read, concisely introducing new concepts and skill building tools required to navigate this data-driven world. A key theme throughout this book is that the necessary abilities to work with data are the very ones inherent to the professional principles of research and information science management. The author constructs parallels from familiar concepts such as data verification, data integrity, and critical analysis of sources, then maps these themes to demonstrate how to produce expert research services using the clout of "big data."

The Accidental Data Scientist is a useful primer, beginning with vocabulary, introduction to processes and overview of data use, and management techniques. **Afelt**, a reference librarian herself, delivers an invaluable resource list for keeping-up-to-date, sharing her curated websites, blogs, Twitter feeds, and more, that in turn can immediately benefit research customers and reinforce ongoing professional learning. So as not to overwhelm readers, it focuses on best practices that leads to high value deliverables, such as customized intelligence (that machine algorithms have yet to replicate), and qualifies why librarians and information specialists should partner as key players in developing "big data" projects. The case studies illustrate new and emerging job challenges within the fields of healthcare, transportation, entertainment, legal, law enforcement, atmospheric science, labor, education and politics. Overall, a lot of information is covered in a very effective and easy to read manner.

When reading a guidebook, the rhetoric is often inconspicuous, but this book presents an interesting dichotomy. Starting on page one, the author states that the profession of librarianship seems under attack with industry behavior labeled as "coming too late ...to respond to game changers," "missed opportunities," and a vocation which has "fallen prey." But in between the reprove, **Afelt** attempts to counterbalance, acknowledging that any concept using the word "big" can bring about intimidation, then rallies with a pep talk for overcoming fear. So on one hand, the tone is critical towards the profession, but then endeavors to promote librarians as adept partners for "big data" projects. Within the profession, this book is perhaps just the type of motivation needed to help solve job image problems, but if shared with a broader audience, the negativity may reinforce dismissive attitudes from those who don't understand the profession. A second quandary was the author's decision to exclude illustrative case studies from the field of research and information management. Although **Afelt** notes that her selection of industries was based on the early adopters of "big data," perhaps it misses the opportunity to not only educate, but also to equip librarians, during a

continued on page 39

From the Reference Desk from page 38

evidence are discussed in individual entries as are various branches of forensics ranging from forensic accounting to forensic psychology. There are also articles that discuss professional aspects of forensics ranging from specific tools and methods to relevant associations and institutes and from key publications to the importance of professional ethics.

The articles vary in length from 500-3,000 words and are written in a straightforward and descriptive style. Each entry starts with a brief definition of the topic and an indication of its significance. The remainder of the essay offers a clear explanation of the topic that provides relevant and useful information as well as offering a firm foundation for further research. Sidebars are used to emphasize certain elements within a topic and as you would expect, “see also” references guide readers to related articles. In addition, there is a category guide in the last volume that is helpful in grouping articles into broad subject areas. All entries have brief bibliographies. The set is not heavily illustrated but includes black and white photos as well as some tables and charts interspersed throughout each volume. Overall the entries are well organized and the layout is inviting and readable.

The second edition of *Forensic Science* is a scholarly, fact-based treatment of a topic that has grown substantially in interest and popularity. The essays are succinct and accessible and provide a resource that will be appreciated by high school students, undergraduates and the informed lay reader. Libraries interested in a handy, less involved treatment may also want to consider *A Dictionary of Forensic Science* by **Suzanne Bell** (2013, 9780199594009, \$21.95; eISBN: 9780191757648) published by Oxford University Press.

Extra Servings

According to their Websites a number of reference publishers are releasing some new and upcoming titles including:

- The *SAGE Encyclopedia of Theory in Psychology* (May 2016, 9781452256719, \$375) is a two-volume set edited by **Harold L. Miller, Jr.** of **Brigham Young University** that “drawing together a team of international scholars... examines the contemporary landscape of all the key theories and theorists, presenting them in the context needed to understand their strengths and weaknesses...”
- The *SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies* (May 2016, 9781483371306, \$595) is a three-volume set edited by **Abbie E. Goldberg** of **Clark University** that “examines and explores the lives and experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals, focusing on the contexts and forces

that shape their lives. The work focuses on LGBTQ issues and identity primarily through the lenses of psychology, human development and sociology, emphasizing queer, feminist and ecological perspectives on the topic...”

- The *SAGE Encyclopedia of Corporate Reputation* (July 2016, 9781483376516, \$375) is a two-volume reference edited by **Craig E. Carroll**, visiting scholar at **New York University** that for the first time, explores “the vast and important field of corporate reputation ... in the format of an encyclopedic reference. The *SAGE Encyclopedia of Corporate Reputation* comprehensively overviews concepts and techniques for identifying, building, measuring, monitoring, evaluating, maintaining, valuing, living up to and/or changing corporate reputations...”

ABC-CLIO/Greenwood has also added a couple of new titles:

- *Folktales and Fairy Tales: Traditions and Texts from around the World*, 2nd Edition (Feb. 2016, 978-1-61069-253-3, \$415; eBook, 978-1-61069-254-0, call for pricing) is a four volume work edited by **Anne E. Duggan** and **Donald Haase**, with **Helen J. Callow** that “is the only multivolume reference in English to offer encyclopedic coverage of this subject matter. The four-volume collection covers national, cultural, regional, and linguistic traditions from around the world as well as motifs, themes, characters, and tale types. Writers and illustrators are included as are filmmakers and composers — and, of course, the tales themselves...”
- *Asian American Culture: From Anime to Tiger Moms* (March 2016, 978-1-4408-2920-8, \$189; eBook, 978-1-4408-2921-5, call for pricing) edited by **Lan Dong** “provides comprehensive coverage of a variety of Asian American cultural forms that enables readers to understand the history, complexity, and contemporary practices in Asian American culture. The contributed entries address the diversity of a group comprising people with geographically discrete origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent, identifying the rich variations across the category of Asian American culture that are key to understanding specific cultural expressions while also pointing out some commonalities...”

Salem Press also has two new titles:

- *Defining Documents in American History: The 1960s (1960-1969)* (April 2016, 978-1-61925-888-4, \$175; e-ISBN: 978-1-61925-889-1,

\$175) is a single-volume resource that “provides students and researchers new insights into the 1960s in the U.S., through an in-depth analysis of forty important primary source documents and their lasting effect on American history...”

- *Fashion Innovators* (April 2016, 978-1-61925-898-3, \$145; e-ISBN: 978-1-61925-899-0, \$145) is a two-volume set that provides “biographies of nearly 200 individuals who had an innovative and influential impact on the development and evolution of the modern fashion industry...”

And last but not least, **Oxford University Press** is planning some new releases:

- *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy* (March 2016, 9780199639755, \$185) edited by **Jane Edwards** is intended for “the entry level trainee — meaning students of music therapy can easily locate information they need for assignments and learning about clinical populations in preparation for placement; each model of practice is presented by the founder or international leader in the approach, resulting in an authoritative text...”
- *The Oxford Handbook of the Prophets* (Sept. 2016, 9780199859559, \$150) edited by **Carolyn Sharp** offers a “wide-ranging discussion of ancient Near Eastern social and cultic contexts; an exploration of focused topics such as the persona of the prophet and the problem of violence in prophetic rhetoric; and sophisticated historical and literary analysis of key prophetic texts...”

Book Reviews from page 36

period when the profession could most benefit from applying “big data” techniques to solve complex library and information science problems, generate economies of time and promote monetary savings for their own institutions.

Despite the seemingly negative tone towards our profession, this text remains a highly useful reference. By taking emerging and complex issues and breaking them into bite-size morsels, the benefit extends to those who want to serve more effectively in their current role and educates prospective information professionals. With the book’s aerial view highlighting the frequent intersections where “big data” creates problems and information science provides answers, some readers may even be on their way to exploring new career paths by reading this book. 🌱