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Book Reviews--Monographic Musings

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

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

Column Editor's Note: *Summer is upon us once again and for those of you like me who work throughout the summer, it's a time where we finish off projects, do our research writing, or prepare for the coming academic year. Personally, I look forward to our month-long family vacation in the Philippines in July. But before that, there is the ALA Annual Conference in June of course. Orlando is really not that bad for an ALA Annual site compared to what we've all gone through with Las Vegas two years ago. I'm looking forward to seeing a lot of my librarian friends and colleagues there.*

Anyway, since this is our ALA Annual issue, we have all ALA publications up for review in this column. ALA Publishing is a vital part of ALA and ALA Editions continues to be the leading publisher for us in the library and information services community. I'm so impressed by the new titles that are coming my way and our all-Michigan librarian book reviewers can't wait to share them with you. I hope you consider buying these books for your library or even for your personal use. It's a small investment to make for our professional development and growth.

If you enjoy reading and wouldn't mind reviewing a book or two, contact me at <gongr1@lcc.edu>. May you all have a relaxing, enjoyable summer and happy reading! — RG

Todaro, Julie. *Mentoring A-Z.* Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2015. 9780838913291. 153 pages. \$58.00 (ALA members: \$52.20)

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

Mentoring is an important part of everyone's career. At one point or another, we have been mentored by people we look up to and admire. In our profession, we probably think of mentoring as only for those who are new and need to be "guided" by more seasoned librarians or those who are in leadership positions. While this is true, a growing number of mentorship programs are now focusing on those who are at the mid-point or even at the later part of their careers. After all, there is never an end to learning new things and no matter where we are in our professional careers, we can surely learn from both ends of the spectrum: from the old and the new.

Julie Todaro, dean of library services at **Austin Community College** in Texas and President-elect of the **American Library Association (ALA)**, writes a concise primer on the in-and-outs of mentoring. **Todaro**, author of a number of books and articles on leadership, management, staff development, assessment and even disaster preparedness, takes a close look at the process of mentoring as a way of expanding, building, and enriching not only one's career but their personal lives as well.

Chapters are brief and build upon each other. The first two chapters discuss the concept of mentoring in general; mentor and mentee roles and responsibilities; including an overview of mentoring programs in various settings (associations, schools, clubs, corporations, etc.). Succeeding chapters provide readers with ideas on designing and implementing mentorship programs in their own institutions as well as training and educating mentors and mentees to ensure successful partnerships and outcomes. The best part of the book in my opinion is the part where the pitfalls and issues are discussed. I really like that the author presents the pitfalls that may arise out of a bad mentoring relationship both on the part of the mentor or mentee. Of course, it is important that assessment and evaluation is done in order to ensure that the goals of the mentoring program meet the needs of the people involved as well as ensure that both parties benefit from the mentoring arrangement.

The only thing that I did not particularly like about the book is the scenario section that is in some of the chapters. I think it would have been better if actual case studies of successful and not so successful mentoring relationships are included instead. However, the strength

of the book is in the appendices. *Mentoring A-Z* provides more than the usual number of appendices especially for a short publication such as this. These appendices are invaluable for those who are thinking of starting or implementing a formal mentoring program. Even more valuable are the checklist for every timeline in the mentoring process. It also includes sample correspondence, application, recommendation, and evaluation forms. **Todaro** takes great pains in outlining the different mentoring programs within ALA (division and roundtable level), professional organizations, state organizations, other higher education institutions, and even blogs and Websites devoted to mentoring and leadership.

Overall, this is an excellent resource on mentoring. If at all, it encourages us to consider sharing our time and talents for the betterment of ourselves and others.

Coyle, Karen. *FRBR, Before and After.* Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2016. 9780838913451. 179 pages. \$50.00 (ALA members: \$45.00)

Reviewed by **Maurine McCourry** (Technical Services Librarian, Hillsdale College, Mossey Library) <mmccourry@hillsdale.edu>

Karen Coyle is an expert at explaining complex information technology in a way that is clear but never condescending, and detailed but never verbose. She is a true insider of the cataloging community, having served on the MARC standards group (MARB), but has been active in additional info tech initiatives, including serving as an ALA representative on the ePub development team, and as a member of the NISO committee that developed OpenURL. Her 2010 **Library Technology Reports** issue, "*Understanding the Semantic Web: Bibliographic Data and Metadata*," which won the 2011 ALCTS Outstanding Publication Award, introduced the concept of linked data to librarians, and remains a standard reference on the topic. She is a regular contributor to library discussion lists, and blogs at *kcogle.blogspot.com*.

FRBR, Before and After, while at first glance somewhat outside of **Coyle's** area of expertise, actually draws heavily on the author's knowledge of systems design and information theory, placing FRBR in context with the theories on which it was built. **Coyle** was an active participant in the development of the technology that laid the foundation for our current catalogs, "using the data we had, not the data we would have like to have" (p.51), and thus understands very well how we got where we are, with systems that don't play very well with others in the now very wide world of digital information. FRBR is portrayed here as an attempt to force concepts developed for use in database design onto vast quantities of data meant to be stored as print. While **Coyle** does not give the impression that FRBR should be abandoned as a model for the work catalogs do, she does question whether its current form does what was intended.

Coyle begins her discussion of FRBR with a detailed overview of the concept of "work" in library cataloging, covering the writing of **Lubetzky, Wilson, Smiraglia, and Taniguchi**. She also introduces a new theory, which she calls a "cognitive view" (p. 17) even though it draws on ideas that some might describe as more socio-cognitive, involving not just an individual's understanding of the term, but also the way it is used in that individual's interactions with others. Regardless of the definition of the abstraction, though, **Coyle** questions its relevance in cataloging as a practical matter, while acknowledging its facility in certain specialized situations, such as music.

Once this central tenet of the FRBR model is explained, **Coyle** addresses the model as a whole, including its place in the history of bibliographic models, the technological environment in which the model exists, and from which it developed, and the more general entity-relation modelling technique on which it is built. The book goes into more

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detail than seen previously regarding the seeming lack of empirical data regarding user needs actually employed in the development of FRBR, alone making it worthy of wide reading and discussion in the profession.

Coyle concludes with descriptions of some of the expansions of the FRBR model that have developed as libraries move onto the Semantic Web, including its use in RDA and in the development of BIBFRAME, and in additional models such as FRBRoo. She hopes that the book can help the library community “to move fruitfully from broad concepts to an integrative approach for bibliographic data” (p. 159). Although it is likely not to be accepted as gospel in that community, it is certainly likely to promote some debate, and hopefully also some refocusing on the user-oriented goals IFLA originally proposed to meet with FRBR.

Reale, Michelle. *Becoming an Embedded Librarian: Making Connections in the Classroom.* Chicago: American Library Association, 2016. 9780838913673. 128 pages. \$54.00 (ALA Members: \$48.60)

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

As academic librarians seek out new ways to engage with the communities they serve, one path to choose is with embedded librarianship programs. Borrowing its name from embedded journalists during the Iraq War, embedded librarians enabled a re-envisioning of our roles and responsibilities at a time when the profession was changing rapidly. Among the many different “flavors” of embedded librarianship used by academic librarians include: librarians participating in practically all classes to ensure that the information needs of students are met; librarians working within a department as opposed to their central library; or librarians focusing on supporting teams of students working on individual assignments. While the methods and the logistics might vary, all of these strategies have elements in common. First, embedded librarians serve in a dedicated role for students, allowing them to easily help students find resources needed for their course. Second, the embedded librarian typically has a good grasp of the assignment and is well situated to help students when they are in trouble. Third, the embedded librarian will typically have a good grasp of the subject matter at large. Finally, the embedded librarian has a good sense of where students are in the project, so they do not have to start every request with “In the beginning...” No matter how the program is incorporated on campus, the embedded librarianship model provides a tremendous opportunity to engage more directly with students and provide a real value to the campus community.

Given the number of options and possibilities for embedded librarian programs, having a good road map is very helpful to librarians hoping to add these services. Written by **Michelle Reale**, an associate professor at **Arcadia University**, this book provides a vision of how she has developed and refined a classroom-based embedded librarian program at **Arcadia University**. She talks about the program developed for the English Thesis class of 15 **Arcadia** seniors. Much of the book focuses on the experiences gained and gleaned from her experience. The book is well written and organized, with chapters containing individual works cited, strategies for success and bulleted final thoughts. The book chapters take you through a class, zeroing in on topics such as relationship building, communication, roles, teaching style, and the librarian as facilitator. This makes the work useful as a reference tool for someone venturing forward with a classroom-based embedded librarian program at their college, university, or community.

Reale makes it clear that there are other types of embedded librarianship programs that she is not going to focus on. The elements not addressed in the book leaves it wanting, especially for administrators who might be looking at how such a program could be incorporated at their library. While **Reale** showcases how her program worked, there was very little discussion about the other elements in place at the library

that make the role possible. As librarians take on these time-intensive responsibilities, they potentially need to shed other work that would be assumed by colleagues in the library. Furthermore, a program for a small senior-level thesis writing class might not be scalable to meet the information needs for the university as a whole. It would have been nice to have this included in the book for librarians wishing to see the entire cost for such an endeavor. But as with any research project, multiple sources and books would need to be consulted to best evaluate the costs and benefits of bringing such a program to your library. As long as the readers see this work as being focused solely on the role and purpose of a classroom-based embedded librarian program, they will likely find it a useful work.

Vnuk, Rebecca. *The Weeding Handbook: A Shelf-by-Shelf Guide.* Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2015. 9780838913277. 196 pages. \$45.00 (ALA members: \$40.50)

Reviewed by **Leslie D. Burke** (Collection Development & Digital Integration Librarian, Kalamazoo College Library) <Leslie.Burke@kzoo.edu>

Our library is currently engaged in several space-related weeding projects so **Rebecca Vnuk's** *The Weeding Handbook* is very timely for me. Many librarians may be familiar with **Vnuk's** popular blog *Shelf Renewal* and her work as Editor, Reference and Collection Management with **Booklist**. She is a public librarian by background, but also an accomplished speaker, writer, and consultant and has received several library industry awards such as Fiction Reviewer of the Year from **Library Journal**, excellence in Reader's Advisory from the Public Library Association, and was named a **Library Journal** Mover and Shaker.

This book is a good collection of practical ideas, some background on collection management theories, and helpful explanations for those who struggle with the concept of weeding, and how to explain it to their communities. Her introduction starts out with a funny, and probably true-to-life skit that she and some colleagues presented at the **2000 ALA Annual Conference** in a workshop by **Merle Jacob** entitled “Weeding the Fiction Collection: Or, Should I Dump *Peyton Place*?” She follows that up with some of the challenges we all face with various staff and constituents about weeding and a careful explanation of how she intends this book to be used.

A unique approach that **Vnuk** takes in this book is the “shelf-by-shelf” guide. She admits that the book is mostly geared toward public libraries and the shelf-by-shelf breakdown is primarily related to Dewey classified collections. This approach provides guidelines on retention, replacement, and the rationale behind weeding and replacement decisions by Dewey hundred groupings (e.g., 300's). Within each hundred break down, there are subdivisions for those Dewey categories that are more expansive and require further explanation.

Although the text focuses mainly on public libraries, **Vnuk** does include some details and suggestions for academic libraries as well. Academic collection managers can still glean some wisdom from this book, especially on how to create a good working policy and procedure manual for weeding tasks. I find it helpful to see an example of a continuous weeding method that would minimize those huge one-time projects which often cause misunderstandings between librarians and their users.

One whole chapter is devoted to “Weeding Gone Wrong,” which addresses the pitfalls of poor planning, questionable decision-making, badly written policies, and most importantly lack of communication with constituent populations (including library staff). An excellent addition to the book is that a full 103 pages — the appendix — include sample collection management plans from real libraries. Although many are from public libraries, there are a few from academic and special libraries. Following the appendix is a nice selection of further readings and some Websites that may be consulted for additional information.

I found this book to be very practical and plan to go back through it to incorporate some of the excellent suggestions **Vnuk** has included, as well as to revisit our collection development and management documents, especially regarding our weeding policies. **Vnuk** credits much of her approach to this book to a publication entitled *CREW: A*

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Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries, created by **Joseph P. Segal** and **Belinda Boon**, of the **Texas State Library and Archives** (updated by **Jeanette Larson**). While there are other weeding texts available, this work's shelf-by-shelf approach and inclusion of sample policies and methods make it a welcome update and addition to the literature. Those libraries that do not use Dewey classification may find ways to adapt **Vnuk's** approach in their own classification schemes.

McAdoo, Monty L. *The Students Survival Guide to Research*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2015. 9780838912768. 232 pages. \$58.00 (ALA members: \$52.20)

Reviewed by **Susan Ponischil** (Access Services Librarian, Grace Hauenstein Library, Aquinas College)
<susan.ponischil@aquinas.edu>

In this digital age when students are relying heavily on Google and Wikipedia for their research, it is important for us academic librarians to help our students do "proper" research. **Monty L. McAdoo**, a Research and Instruction Librarian at **Edinboro University of Pennsylvania**, writes a clear and concise instruction manual for students trying to navigate the world of research. The tone, coverage, and layout of this book are geared towards students in that liminal state between high school and college. Compared to **William Badke's** *Research Strategies* book, which talks about the role of research in education, **McAdoo** addresses the challenges of research and offers step-by-step solutions.

The chapters in this 232 paged guide are relatively short, ranging from seven to twenty-two pages. Thirty-three figures, i.e., charts,

screenshots, etc. are used throughout to supplement the text. Each chapter includes tips covering things like "backup your files regularly and often", and "if you're having difficulty reading or understanding an article it's probably not a good source for you to use in your research." At the end of each chapter are question prompts called reflections which, according to the author, are "designed to help you think more critically about yourself and the research process." Examples range from, "is it easy or difficult for you to ask for and act on feedback?" to "click on the author's name of one of the articles you think might be relevant" and "did you find other articles by the same author that might be relevant?"

From the outset **McAdoo** keeps the discussion simple. He begins by talking about what research is and what it requires. His first foray into the more practical aspects of research begins with a look at the assignment, i.e., how long does the paper have to be, what are the deadlines, and which resources will be accepted. This section also includes straightforward explanations of the inherent and relative values of term paper assessment and how they affect grades, which students will appreciate. Topic selection, the first official step in the research process in most schema, is introduced about a third of the way in. Strategies for topic exploration such as freewriting, mapping, and cubing are explored as well. In addition, simplistic rationale for determining the strengths and weaknesses of various resource types is offered. For example, the first of three bullet points under weaknesses for Web resources reads "information is often inaccurate, purposely biased, or out of date."

Possible misconceptions when viewing results lists help to provide a more analytical way for students to think about the information they find. On the topic of plagiarism, **McAdoo's** audience is clear when he states that "once you've committed plagiarism your instructors are likely to scrutinize your work more heavily in the future." The last two chapters offer help getting started writing a paper with tips for managing anxiety and getting help when needed, and a sample search that begins with topic selection and ends with a brief introduction to reading and evaluating sources.

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At the end of the book is an ample index preceded by a twelve paged glossary. Glossary words are highlighted throughout the text. If the audience is, in fact, students in this liminal state between high school and college, this book does a good job of telling students what they need to know. The question is, will they read it? As for instructors, they may find this resource useful for designing lesson plans.

Mitchell, Erik T. *Library Linked Data, Early Activity & Development*. Chicago, IL: ALA. Library Technology Reports series. 9780838959688. 36 pages. \$43.00 (ALA members: \$38.70)

Reviewed by **Dao Rong Gong** (Systems Librarian, Michigan State University Libraries) <gongd@msu.edu>

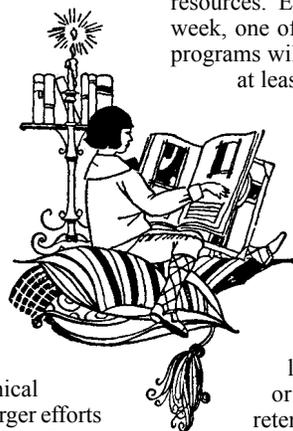
Linked data continues to be one of the most discussed topics in library, archives and museum (LAM) community. While much has been said and done both in theory and practice, linked data is perceived as a viable metadata alternative by the LAM community, and to this day keeps evolving. However, how much do we know about the current state of library linked data?

Erik T. Mitchell's *Library Linked Data, Early Activity & Development* tries to answer just that question. Published as part of the Library Technology Report series from ALA, the author takes a panoramic view of linked data including linked open data landscape and the important core issues surrounding these practices.

This publication is **Mitchell's** second Library Technology Report series work that deals with the topic of library linked data. In 2013, **Mitchell** published his first work on *Library Linked Data, Research and Adoption*. In that publication, he takes on a similar approach by reviewing the state of linked data practices at the time. Most of that takes root on his research of the semantic Web, new bibliographic and metadata standards, library services and discovery platforms. He manages to focus on the general state and direction of metadata specifically linked open data. Fast forward to today, in writing his second publication, he revisits the same topic but with more focus on the broad trends and technologies surrounding linked data practices and implementation.

The first three chapters deal with the current state of linked data and give an overview of trends, noticeable projects, programs, and research initiatives. It also touches on the new development of linked data vocabularies, standards, as well as applied systems that are on the horizon. Throughout the chapters, the author provides a rich and well covered collection of resources and illustrative context on the major players and technologies in the current linked data landscape. In the linked data development, the author argues advancements of technology "have had dramatic influence on the direction of projects" (page 19). In the technical sphere, RDF/XML remains the metadata standard, and larger efforts are on collaboration, discussion about policy, governance, and funding.

The last chapter, which stands out as the most exciting part of this book, talks about opportunities and challenges facing library linked data. The author points out that data openness, standard compatibility and supporting system are the emerging issues. It also explores the impact of existing linked data projects and practice as well as educational opportunities. It is also insightful to read that the author discusses how we can support systems--both open source and commercial. Although I wish the author devotes more discussions on the potential roles library system creators and providers can play in linked data development. At the daily operations level, a RDF record editor or conversion tool, a triple-store, or SPARQL endpoint can help libraries become part of the linked data practices or implementation even if it is on an experimental basis.



As a busy systems librarian, I often have a hard time keeping track of new developments in linked data or because of the nature of my work, my tendency is to only concentrate on the technology side. If only for that, I appreciate reading **Mitchell's** book and getting a comprehensive linked data update in a clear and concise way. Although it's definitely a quick read, there's a lot to ponder at the end.

Barbakoff, Audrey. *Adults Just Wanna Have Fun: Programs for Emerging Adults*. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2016. 136 pages. \$49.00 (ALA members: \$44.10)

Reviewed by **Emma Olmstead-Rumsey** (Adult Services Librarian, Cromaine Library) <eolmstead@cromaine.org>

Despite its flippant-sounding title, *Adults Just Wanna Have Fun* is a serious book. Although it superficially has a "program cookbook" structure, this is not a title you should dip into without reading the thoughtful supporting text in which the program suggestions are embedded. **Barbakoff**, Adult Services Manager at the **Kitsap (WA) Regional Library** and one of *Library Journal's* 2013 Movers & Shakers, makes a fairly complex case about the value of play in learning in the introductions to the book and to each section, and any program implemented without the context of this argument will likely be less effective.

Barbakoff cites several studies linking the inclusion of play and hands-on experimentation to better learning outcomes. For instance, one study found that undergraduates in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) courses were 55% more likely to fail a lecture-based class than one with even a small active learning component. While this data may help a public librarian (the book's target audience) pitch fun adult programs to her manager or director, they are vital to academic librarians as well since academic librarians are much more likely to face resistance by staff who see programs like **Barbakoff's** as diverting resources away from more scholarly programming that directly supports the curriculum and/or essential learning outcomes (ELOs).

These justifications will be important if you intend to implement one or more of the suggested programs from this volume. With the exception of the craft/maker programs, most require a fairly high investment of resources. Especially for larger libraries that are open many hours per week, one of the biggest challenges with implementing the splashier programs will be scheduling. Many of the included programs require at least a part of the library (not a classroom or program room) to be exclusively devoted to the planned activity, which typically means an after-hours program. In addition, since academic libraries can't raid a Youth Services department for supplies and expertise the way public librarians can, many of the programs may also require investments in materials and staff time.

Overall, even if you don't end up implementing any of the programs that are included, I recommend taking the small amount of time necessary to read through this book. It is likely to change your thinking about how your library can best use programming to support your college's or university's goals for student success, persistence, and retention. Rather than offering endless information literacy instruction sessions or citation workshops, which students will see as an extension of the passive listening that is required in so many of their courses, consider helping students learn through play. Although **Barbakoff** would caution us not to underestimate play's inherent value, the even more significant impact of taking her advice will be students' improved retention of information from instruction sessions in which they actively participate in their own learning. 🌟