

Against the Grain

Manuscript 8248

Book Reviews – Monographic Musings

Regina Gong

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Regina Gong** (Open Educational Resources (OER) Project Manager/Head of Technical Services and Systems, Lansing Community College Library) <gongr1@lcc.edu>

Column Editor's Note: *They say all good things must come to an end. After seventeen issues and ninety-eight book reviews written by my amazing book reviewers, I am moving on. Though I enjoy serving as your book review editor for the past three years, it's time for me to pass on the torch to my friend and fellow ATG column editor, Corey Seaman.*

This fall 2018 semester, I will be starting with my Ph.D. in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education (HALE) at Michigan State University. I've been thinking about pursuing my doctorate degree for a long time, and I'm finally at a stage in my life and career where I can fulfill this lifelong dream. I intend to keep my full-time job at LCC while I'm doing my Ph.D., so needless to say, my plate is going to be very full.

I would like to thank Katina and Tom for their trust and support. Both of you have been so helpful and open to whatever suggestions I may have with regards to this column. Tom and I always make it a point to have breakfast both at ALA Midwinter and Annual Conferences. I hope we can still continue that. I look forward to coming back to Charleston in November to see everyone. I'm not really out of the ATG family because I'm doing a guest editorial on OER for next year's February issue. I would also like to thank Toni Nix for always keeping me on track with deadlines and for doing a great job in proofing and layout of this column. You always are a joy to work with Toni.

Lastly, I would like to thank all my awesome book reviewers (there's too many of you to mention) who without them this column would not be possible. You always came through each time, and you all make my job easy since your reviews are well-written, thoughtful, and insightful. I'm sure Corey will enjoy working with you all as well. Please stay and keep on reviewing books.

In the September 2018 issue, Corey's byline will take my place. It's been my pleasure doing this column, and I promise to be back as a reviewer in future issues. Until then, have a wonderful, relaxing, and enjoyable summer break. Happy reading! — RG

Verminski, Alana, and Blanchat, Kelly Marie. *Fundamentals of Electronic Resources Management.* ALA Fundamentals Series. Chicago, IL: Neal-Schuman, 2017. 9780838915417. 251 pages. \$65.

Reviewed by **Frances Krempasky** (Electronic Resources Management Librarian, Lansing Community College Library) <krempf@lcc.edu>

Electronic resource librarians often find themselves navigating a complex myriad of tasks. We solve resource access issues, decipher e-resource license agreements, and are the “bridge” between Technical Service departments and collection management and reference colleagues. The job of managing electronic resources involves many skills, including the ability to organize complex processes and workflows, communicate effectively, and negotiate with vendors. In *Fundamentals of Electronic Resources Management*, authors **Alana Verminski**, Collection Development Librarian at the **University of Vermont**, and **Kelly Marie Blanchat**, Electronic Resources Librarian at **Yale University**, present well written, organized, and relevant content that will be of interest to both new and experienced electronic resource librarians. This book is part of the “ALA fundamentals series,” and it epitomizes the series title.

The ten chapters in this volume range from “getting your feet wet,” to marketing electronic resources, and staying up-to-date with emerging trends. The authors must be commended for including topics that are important to e-resource librarians and presenting them in a cohesive, thorough, and understandable manner. Chapters on more complex

topics, such as setting up and maintaining access, and usage statistics, include information that the reader can understand and immediately use. The authors bold keywords in the text and include a glossary at the end of the book as well as an index. Appendices include an “Open Access Resource Rubric” and a “License Review Checklist.” Each chapter has blocks of content that further showcase information on a topic such as “Sample troubleshooting triage” for access issues. Each chapter also includes references and “Further Readings.”

As an Electronic Resources Librarian at a community college, I find myself wishing I had this book available to me when I was new to the field. Chapter 1, an introduction to e-resources, includes background information on the e-resources life cycle and includes pointers to **NASIG's** “Core Competencies for Electronic Resources Librarians,” and **TERMS** (Techniques for Electronic Resource Management).

The chapter “Ways to pay,” offers a clear description of electronic resource purchase models. It distinguishes subscription databases and purchasing models for eBooks, journals, and streaming media content. As we move toward more “just-in-time” purchase strategies, a discussion of PPV (pay-per-view) journal articles, PDA (Patron Driven Acquisitions) and DDA (Demand Driven Acquisitions) eBooks and streaming videos are presented. Other key areas of focus in this book are the negotiation and licensing of electronic resources and the structure and language used in license agreements and what areas should be reviewed. **Verminski** and **Blanchat** also include a chapter on managing e-resources and detail various authentication methods, activation of a Knowledge Base (KB), setting up a discovery system, link resolvers, and OpenURL. Included are steps for “Sample troubleshooting triage,” terrific information for anyone trying to resolve access issues.

Often, new electronic resources librarians are stymied by usage statistics, and may not be familiar with **COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Reports)**. This book presents a thorough overview of usage statistics and reporting, including basic principles for documenting workflows and investigating usage data for problems.

Electronic resources librarians are often challenged by new technologies, changes in publishing, scholarly communication, and user needs and expectations. **Verminski** and **Blanchat** illustrate these changes in the last chapter of the book, which focuses on emerging trends and the impact of change on electronic resource management. For example, Open access (OA) has expanded to include low-cost access to scholarly content. Publishers are struggling to develop OA pricing models that are sustainable. Added to the mix are issues that librarians and publishers are experiencing over the sharing of scholarly articles on Twitter, or Sci-Hub, which is pirating purchased institutional content. The authors suggest that it may be libraries that educate users to be lifelong information seekers and teach them to find and evaluate legal OA content.

The high costs of textbooks is a continuing problem for students and educators. In response to this, Open Educational Resources (OER) have been created as a textbook alternative. These resources are free of cost and access barriers. With an OER Creative Commons license, users can adapt and share work. Another focus for libraries is the creation of institutional repositories for their scholarly research work, including articles, theses, and dissertations. Electronic resource librarians must be aware of these changes in scholarly publishing and how they impact e-resource management.

This book is a delight to read, and I highly recommend it. New electronic resources librarians will be grateful for the depth and clarity of the “fundamental” content. Experienced electronic resources librarians will also find this book valuable, especially as a reminder about good practices in e-resource management, and to keep aware of new trends in the publishing industry, higher education, and the vendor landscape.

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Yi, Zhixian. *Marketing Services and Resources in Information Organizations*. Cambridge, MA: Chandos Publishing, 2018. 9780081007983. 154 pages. \$78.95.

Reviewed by **Ashley Fast Bailey** (Director, Collection Development and Workflow Solutions, Central and Southeastern U.S., GOBI Library Solutions) <abailey@ybp.com>

Marketing Services and Resources in Information Organizations by **Dr. Zhixian Yi** is a practical and theoretical work on marketing strategies and approaches to promoting information organizations in the twenty-first century. **Dr. Yi** is a lecturer at the School of Information Studies at **Charles Sturt University** (Australia), where he serves as the Leadership, Specialization Coordinator. He based this work on his marketing courses and practical studies of academic librarian's perceptions and perspectives on marketing. This book introduces basic marketing concepts, how to utilize services and resources in the digital age, and gives the reader empirical-based techniques, strategies, and approaches. The chapters integrate real-world experiences and surveys, strategies, and approaches to marketing in an information organization.

Dr. Yi opens the work by laying the groundwork for subsequent chapters by defining and expounding on marketing and what that means to information organizations, as well as the broader marketplace. This is the first step in the marketing process, and by defining marketing in the context of an information organization and expanding on why it is important, **Dr. Yi** brings in the perspective of marketing in a non-profit. Marketing is critical in identifying the needs of users and how those needs can be met and exceeded. Marketing for an information organization has a various number of steps that are expounded on throughout this work.

The second step in the market research process is identifying users' needs and wants. These needs can be individual needs, physical needs, and social needs. **Dr. Yi** discusses techniques to practically uncover these. From surveys to interviews to focus groups, these approaches can be used to gather information. Surveys and results from past studies are included throughout the work, and this chapter has examples of analyzing these methods.

Market segmentation, targeting, and positioning is the third step in the market research process. *Marketing Services and Resources in Information Organizations* illustrates the importance of these pieces by outlining how segmenting a user base into smaller groups can provide an organization with more targeted marketing efforts and yield great results. **Dr. Yi** provides criteria for effectively segmenting markets and the methods used to do so. Going right into the fourth step of the marketing process, the marketing mix decision, **Dr. Yi** defines and expounds on this strategy. There are seven P's to the marketing mix, and each is broken down in this work as it relates to a non-profit marketing strategy. In addition, tools to create a marketing mix for an information organization are outlined.

Strategic marketing planning, implementation, and evaluation is the last piece of the marketing process. It is important to craft a marketing plan to implement all the information gathered and to have a process forward. **Dr. Yi** gives practical steps for writing the marketing plan and providing the elements that need to be a part of it. After the writing process, the organization must implement and evaluate the plan to address and meet the needs of its users. By being proactive and innovative in approaches, an information organization can demonstrate its value to its users and stakeholders. After a marketing plan is implemented, ongoing evaluation is the key. As steps are executed, the organization should keep tabs on the results. *Marketing Services and Resources in Information Organizations* concludes by addressing various techniques for marketing electronic resources, using social media to market to the user base, and discussing the future of marketing services and resources.

Dr. Yi uses practical explanations, survey-based results, and various techniques to outline how the marketing process can be valuable to non-profit information organizations. *Marketing Services and Resources in Information Organizations* is a work that can serve as a guide to navigating the marketing process. By exploring the topic of marketing in a broad sense, it is a resourceful tool and guidebook to provide administrators, instructors, and even students with a broad understanding of marketing to information organizations and views on this process from multiple perspectives.

Burke, John R. *Library Technology Companion: A Basic Guide for Library Staff*. 5th ed. Chicago, IL: ALA Neal-Schuman Publishers. 2016. 9780838913826. 232 pages. \$80.00.

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

Writing comprehensive guidebooks on library technologies can be jarring. Now on its 5th edition, this book takes off with "a complete reorganization and update" from the previous 2013 edition. The author **John J. Burk**, an academic library director, has written several technology related books and is actively involved in the library information technology field. His audience are library professionals and staff in need of essential know-how on technology planning and implementation, or on dealing with patrons who may or may not be technology savvy. The book is intended to be a "one-stop overview of all technologies used in libraries today." The text can be a how-to guidebook or a user's manual and comes with some handy review questions at the end of each chapter, with selected reading list on related topics. Other features include an index and a glossary of information technology related terms. Although as a guidebook, the list of glossary could be a bit more comprehensive.

Often guidebooks or manuals written by information professionals tend to be technology-centric. Avoiding extensive technological details, this book, on the other hand, holds multi-dimensional views for approaching the topic. In defining the library technology, it started with historical perspectives in the application of technology. It's then followed by a unique survey instrument that the author designed and collected in 2015 to illustrate how library staff members are using technology (chapter 2), adding a very intriguing part to this book. In another chapter, he picks his argument from societal and technological angles, talking about the universal design, digital divide and accessibility, which have been getting more attention and yet remains unresolved (chapter 12).

Information Management System (MIS) is often taught in business school rather than library schools. But the essence of MIS can be essentially applied to the networked computational tools in support of the library operation, for teaching, learning or purely recreation. This concept can be well aligned to this book. "Today or near future, we will have what might be called a complex library," the author says, it's "an amalgamation of various types of media and information sources, reaching toward amazing changes (artificial intelligence-enhanced finding tools for vast digital libraries)" (p.180).

For library information technology planners, predicting what lies ahead is not merely a curiosity. The author takes this rather challenging task through his own crystal ball in the last section of his book (chapter 15, 16 and 17). Readers find an interesting read for technologies that are dead, dying or on the chopping block. Those go beyond the matter of preservation. In the section "trends and technologies to watch," the author offered his own list of things that we ought to pay attention to. At the end, readers find advice about how to keep track of information technology development, a popular topic among IT professionals. Also a long list of bibliography that prepares people willing to take it on and stay on top of the game by themselves.

As a companion book, it may not have all the details about library technologies, but it offers a good perspective about trending issues from the library technology world. 🍷

