

Against the Grain

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Book Reviews- Monographic Musings

Corey Seeman

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Corey Seeman** (Director, Kresge Library Services, Stephen M. Ross School of Business, University of Michigan; Phone: 734-764-9969) <cseeman@umich.edu> Twitter @cseeman

Column Editor's Note: *Third time is the charm right? Very excited to have my third **Monographic Musings** column in **Against the Grain**. This is once again an interesting mix of titles that cover a variety of librarian topics. You will find works here on scholarly communication, instruction, electronic resource management, and service design. But if there is a common thread throughout these works (and a nice tie in with my other column), it is the role and importance of change. This can be challenging as we work with different communities, generations and resources that are both modern and antiquated.*

Thanks to my great reviewers for getting items for my third column. Thanks to **Michelle Polchow**, **Katharine Swart**, and my two colleagues from **Michigan State University**, **Jane Meland** and **Steven W. Sowards**.

As a reminder, I have introduced a standard rating reference. Being a big fan of **Ebert and Siskel** (may they both rest in peace), I loved the way that they presented a clear way to show if something was worth watching. **Roger Ebert** used four stars (for his newspaper reviews in the **Chicago Sun Times**) to let you know quickly if this is something worth the time and money. So to that end, I have created the **ATG Reviewer Rating** that would be used from book to book. I came up with this rating to reflect our collaborative collections and resource sharing means. I think it helps classify the importance of these books.

- **I need this book on my nightstand.** (This book is so good, that I want a copy close at hand when I am in bed.)
- **I need this on my desk.** (This book is so valuable, that I want my own copy at my desk that I will share with no one.)
- **I need this in my library.** (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)
- **I need this available somewhere in my shared network.** (I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get it with three to five days via my network catalog.)
- **I'll use my money elsewhere.** (Just not sure this is a useful book for my library or my network.)

If you would like to be a reviewer for **Against the Grain**, please write me at <cseeman@umich.edu>. If you have a book you would like to see reviewed in a future column, please also write me directly.

Happy reading and be nutty! — CS

Anderson, Rick. *Scholarly Communication: What Everyone Needs to Know.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 9780190639457, 280 pages. \$16.95 paperback

Reviewed by **Steven W. Sowards** (Associate Director for Collections, Michigan State University Libraries, East Lansing MI) <sowards@msu.edu>

Author **Rick Anderson** is a highly respected figure in academic librarianship: Associate Dean for Collections & Scholarly Communication at the **University of Utah Libraries**, a regular contributor to the *Scholarly Kitchen* blog,¹ and former president of both **NASIG** and the **Society for Scholarly Publishing**. If anyone can create a useful one volume overview of what might be the single most pressing issue facing academic libraries, it is very likely that **Rick Anderson** might be the only one up to the task. As he admits in the introduction, it is a tall order for one person to address such a wide-ranging theme, but there is value in seeing a consistent perspective applied to a complicated

situation. **Anderson's** connections in both publishing and libraries lend credibility to his views.

Anderson has presented a useful overview of facts and factors driving scholarly communication today and adopts a question-and-answer format ("What is demand-driven acquisition?") to break down large topics such as copyright, metrics, and the work of university presses.

The result is a credible handbook to which any intelligent reader can turn to address specific situations. The format and writing also invite browsing and discovery.

His perspective here is intentionally descriptive, not polemical: summarizing where we are (and how we got here), sparing in speculation about what comes next, and not trying to pick any fights. As he states in his introduction, "there is one thing the author has tried very hard not to include in this book, and that is issue advocacy" despite the obvious temptation to land a punch while looking at publisher pricing,

copyright law, open access costs, and more. Of course, **Anderson** is well able to offer an opinion when he chooses. One might usefully complement this book with regular attention to *Scholarly Kitchen*, to find some sharper responses to recent developments (read for example his post of November 26, 2018, "*Do You Have Concerns about Plan S? Then You Must be an Irresponsible, Privileged, Conspiratorial Hypocrite*").²

Anderson is broadly informed and articulate, and casts a wide net: the origin of scholarly communication in the 1600s; the purpose and elaboration of copyright law (especially in the United States); the interplay between scholars, publishers and libraries; global estimates of the number of scholarly journals and spending for scholarly content; publishing as an element in faculty tenure and promotion; and the "serials crisis" and the "Big Deal" as factors in library decision-making. He speaks often about scholars as authors; peer review; the varieties of publishing, and the new problem of predatory publishers; copyright and open access; and digital realities from eBooks to impact factors.

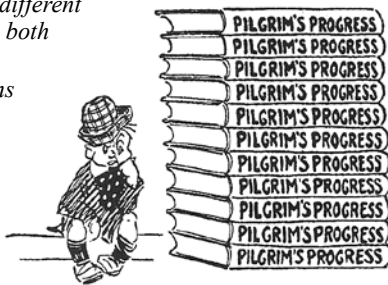
If this is a book for "everyone," who might benefit from reading? These pages could orient librarians learning to work inside the collection building, acquisitions and publishing ecosystem; faculty researchers and their administrators; funding bodies and grant makers; and advisors to trustees, legislators and billionaire thinkers. For publishers and professors, **Anderson's** summary will clarify how the 21st century looks to librarians.

Of course, scholarly communication is not the sum total of publishing and information delivery. **Anderson** devotes less space to tangential challenges such as self-publishing; Amazon as a disruptive force in both production and sales; the explosion of competing online media; or issues of privacy, piracy and censorship in the global market. Related matters also outside his scope are the costs of digital infrastructure, or the impact of adjunct hiring on faculty research and publishing. Librarians in search of a literature review must look elsewhere as well: **Anderson** backs up his statements with over a hundred URL-linked citations, but there is no bibliography, and no organized plan that suggests further reading.

Comparable recent works include **John Regazzi's** *Scholarly Communications* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) and **Ken Hyland's** *Academic Publishing* (Oxford University Press, 2015), but **Anderson's** book is newer and has different goals.³ His approach is less analytical, more designed for quick orientation, and more accessible to a large audience of educated, motivated readers. This is a high quality **Oxford University Press** product at an attractive price — available either in hard copy or as an eBook — that can orient a long list of potential readers.

ATG Reviewer Rating: *I need this in my library.* (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)

continued on page 30



Benjes-Small, Candice and Miller, Rebecca K. *The New Instruction Librarian: A Workbook for Trainers and Learners.* Chicago: American Library Association, 2017. 9780838914564, 256 pages. \$68.00 (ALA Members \$61.20)

Reviewed by **Jane Meland** (Assistant Director for Public Services, Michigan State College of Law, Schaefer Law Library, East Lansing) <jane.meland@law.msu.edu>

With all the changes that are taking place in librarianship, one of the major disruptions has been in the realm of library instruction, especially in the light of an ever-increasing interest in teaching lifelong skills through information literacy. How librarians address these changes mirrors some of the transitions we face throughout our careers. We transition from library school into a professional position, we transition into the culture of our library and possibly a bigger institution, and we may transition into different roles, such as supervisors, mentors, and trainers. Preparation for these transitions comes from many sources. Library school provides us with the conceptual and practical background to transition into a professional librarian position. Training and mentorship provide us with the background to learn our jobs, while work experience provides us with the depth of knowledge needed to transition into leadership roles. Yet, one transition that librarians are being asked to make more and more often is into that of the instruction librarian.

As more librarians are called upon to take on teaching roles, many of us find ourselves unprepared to step into the classroom. Library science school does an excellent job of introducing us to the conceptual aspects of our work, and on the job training allows us to hone our skills. Yet, neither learning experience prepares us to teach. This dilemma is magnified when trainers find few resources to help facilitate this transition, leaving new librarians and their trainers asking themselves: how exactly does one become an instruction librarian?

To answer that question **Candice Benjes-Small and Rebecca K. Miller** have authored *The New Instruction Librarian: A Workbook for Trainers and Learners*, a practical guide designed to empower librarians with the tools and strategies they need to transition into the role of instruction librarian. The authors come at this topic with experience both as new teaching librarians and as trainers and draw upon the dissatisfaction they felt navigating the resources on information literacy instruction. While information literacy sources are plentiful, the authors discovered a dearth of materials intended to train and orient new librarians to their roles as instructors. This book fills that niche.

The book is organized into four parts. Part one defines the “instruction librarian” and offers suggestions for hiring and training new instruction librarians. Part two, which makes up the bulk of the book, discusses the “many hats” that instruction librarians wear. Part three focuses on feedback and performance evaluation. And part four includes the tools and templates that are referenced throughout the book.

As a workbook, each chapter includes activities and reading lists designed to provide the reader with practical experience applying and exploring the book’s concepts. Additionally, some chapters include an “Ask the Experts” section where seasoned librarians are asked to provide expert advice on how to handle a hypothetical problem. The scenarios are realistic and the advice is insightful, providing new instruction librarians with guidance on how to handle a sticky situation.

The book has much to offer, but its emphasis on management theory overshadows the core aspects of developing, executing, and assessing a library instruction session. Organizational culture and personnel management play an important role in the orientation of any librarian. However, I think most novice instruction librarians will pick this book up expecting greater emphasis on course design, lesson planning, and teaching activities, and may find themselves disappointed with, what I consider, the modest attention given these topics.

That said, the book does a good job with its overall goal of preparing librarians as they transition into teaching roles and providing them with the foundation needed to succeed as an instruction librarian.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this available somewhere in my shared network. (I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get it with three to five days via my network catalog.)

Marquez, Joe J. and Annie Downey. *Getting Started in Service Design: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians.* Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2017. 9780838915646, 120 pages. \$60.00 (\$54.00 for ALA Members).

Reviewed by **Katherine Swart** (Collection Development Librarian, Hekman Library, Calvin College) <kswart20@calvin.edu>

Assessment, evaluation of services, process improvement, user-centered experience: All are familiar buzzwords that have been floating around the library world for years. Indeed, librarians are not unfamiliar with scrutinizing their services as a way both to prove and to improve their worth. Many improvement methods like Lean and Service Design have made their way from business over to libraries, but it can be tricky for libraries to fit the mold.

In *Getting Started in Service Design* **Joe J. Marquez** and **Annie Downey** make the user-centered Service Design process easy to implement in libraries and walk readers through all the steps necessary to have a successful project. **Marquez** is the Social Sciences and User Experience Librarian at **Reed College Library** in Portland, Oregon. **Downey** is the Associate College Librarian and Director of Research Services at **Reed College Library**. Both have a keen interest in Service Design and were awarded fellowships from the **ALA Center for the Future of Libraries**.

Getting Started in Service Design (the book being reviewed here) is actually a workbook that supplements the author’s 2016 book *Library Service Design: A LITA Guide to Holistic Assessment, Insight, and Improvement*.⁴ Without having read the original book, readers unfamiliar with Service Design will not find much meaning in the workbook. The authors provide a basic introduction to Service Design in the workbook, but librarians new to Service Design will develop a better understanding of the process by reading the original book first. (*Editor’s note: Kudos to the reviewer for getting and reading the original book for this piece.*)

Marquez and **Downey** describe Service Design as a process and a mindset. Essentially, it is a framework for assessing and improving library services by focusing on how users interact with the library. The authors begin by describing library Service Design heuristics or strategic questions readers can ask of their library services. The heuristics worksheets are especially helpful in summarizing each design principle and laying out what questions to ask.

Perhaps, the most useful chapter is the one on Service Design tools. Once a library has a project plan and team, the next step is to use a variety of tools in order to evaluate the service they want to assess. **Marquez** and **Downey** describe eighteen different tools, often including charts and worksheets readers can fill in. For example, the authors provide a diagram of an ecology map as a way to evaluate “the context in which a service operates.” Other examples include tips on how to write an effective user survey, skills to remember when holding a user discussion group, and methods for creating customer journey maps (a visual representation of a user’s or customer’s path to get what they need at your organization or your library).

Having a background in Lean process improvement, I was curious to see if *Getting Started in Library Service Design* offered any additional insights. Unfortunately, I didn’t see anything new or revolutionary in this workbook. In fact I think reading the authors’ 2016 book will serve readers just as well. Most of the Service Design tools are explained in detail in the original book, and the authors do a more thorough job explaining the methodology. The only benefit of the workbook is the fill-in-the-blanks worksheets that readers can employ during their projects. If you already have a background in Service Design and just

continued on page 32

Book Reviews from page 30

need a manual for reference while you're conducting projects, then the workbook is an asset. If you're new to Service Design, I recommend **Marquez's** and **Downey's** 2016 book and then deciding whether you need their 2017 book, which reiterates pretty much the same advice.

ATG Reviewer Rating: *I need this available somewhere in my shared network. (I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get it with three to five days via my network catalog.)*

Stachokas, George. *Reengineering the Library: Issues in Electronic Resources Management.* Chicago: ALA Editions, 2018. 978-0-8389-1621-6, 320 pages. \$79.00 (ALA Members \$71.10)

Reviewed by **Michelle Polchow** (Electronic Resources Librarian, University of California, Davis) <mpolchow@ucdavis.edu>

A title in the ALCTS (American Library Association's Association for Library Collections and Technical Services) monograph series, this book pulls together an edited collection of chapters authored primarily by librarians with electronic resources (e-resources) responsibilities and perspectives. The authors have pulled together case studies that reveal the state of e-resources management over the last five to ten years, some two to three decades after the initial widespread incorporation of electronic resources in library collections.

Stachokas acknowledges needed change in our profession and offers both solutions to future problems and recounting (especially in chapters six and ten) of where libraries currently find themselves on this journey to manage e-resources. In discussion of the marketplace, a citation attributed to **Marshall Breeding**, a recognized expert on library technology, predicts that by 2026 libraries should reduce dependencies on commercial producers of both metadata and content, and improve user experience by establishing open high-quality linked metadata and progress towards the semantic web. Another chapter on professional competencies for e-resources librarians, **Christine Korytnyk Dulaney** and **Kari Schmidt** notes a slow change in management approaches. Even as budgets and quantity of e-resources universally reaches 80% of current library activity, there remains a lopsided distribution of staff dedicated to physical resources. The degree of lopsidedness frequently translates to a single e-resources librarian and rarely are job competencies to manage e-resources distributed across 80% of the library. As I write this review, **Breeding's** prediction is only eight years out for libraries to produce open, standardized and linked metadata. To this end, one chapter has passing mention of a struggling open metadata knowledgebase project. Another chapter concerning freely available e-resources mentions librarians are resistant to contribute to metadata projects without direct benefit to their institution. If these are the futuristic challenges and shared vision of academic libraries, an envisioned path to this end is not central to this book and leaves a rather bleak "state of the union."

As a reader, I considered these case studies using the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Many threats and weaknesses are touched upon, but the book offers little to rectify looming issues such as: libraries' collective struggle to convey their value to their institution and stakeholders; a research environment where users no longer use the library catalog as a primary access point for e-resources; and slow adoption to data mine the technology systems to monitor user satisfaction and gain market strength by adaptation, as is the modern business practice in virtual environments. Using the SWOT analysis, it seems a missed opportunity that few case studies optimize libraries' unique privileges granted through copyright law.

From a different angle, the book is an excellent retrospective review of cooperation achieved by libraries, publishers, and technology providers over the last 10 years, deploying information standards such as COUNTER, DOI, OpenURL, SERU, and SUSHI. It's well-deserved acknowledgement for the work that has propelled libraries' evolution from the linear processing of print and physical resources to complex and dynamic management of e-resources, often under staff reduction constraints. A few authors mention metadata standardization as contrary to local campus need, but ultimately this book makes the case that retrospectively, standards have achieved the greatest successes for managing e-resources. Overall, this book may be of less value to professionals in the trenches of e-resources management, but perhaps mandatory reading for library administrators to more fully understand the severity and urgency of the reengineering needs. This might be especially true for library administrators who do not see the complexity of the management of electronic resources as a real concern or problem. Returning to the SWOT analysis, if libraries fail to satisfy users' information needs in this dynamic environment, the likely outcome will be an undervalued institution overcome by its current threats and weaknesses. The long-term management of e-resources can no longer be sustained by just a few library employees. If the details of management outlined by the book are fully understood by administrators, actionable change at the highest levels seems a critical next step in order that performance catch up to the 80% focus on spending and collection holdings.

ATG Reviewer Rating: *I need this in my library. (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)* 🐼

Endnotes

1. See <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/author/planxty/> for **Rick Anderson's** articles from the *Scholarly Kitchen*.
2. Please see <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2018/11/26/do-you-have-concerns-about-plan-s-then-you-must-be-an-irresponsible-privileged-conspiratorial-hypocrite/>.
3. See **Regazzi, J. J.** (2015). *Scholarly communications: A history from content as king to content as kingmaker* & **Hyland, K.** (2015). *Academic publishing: Issues and challenges in the construction of knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. **Marquez, J. J., & Downey, A.** (2016). *Library service design: A LITA guide to holistic assessment, insight, and improvement*.

Rumors from page 28

Who doesn't like chocolate? Not me and not **Ann Okerson** or **IGI Global** based in Hershey, PA. This is from **Atlas Obscura** (February 21, 2019). The vessel is now in the collection of the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología in Guatemala. Courtesy **James A. Doyle** — During the classical period of the Maya, from approximately 250 to 900 A.D., chocolate was a cornerstone of

daily life. It was currency, a ritual ingredient, and a pleasurable drink. But until recently, the details of Maya life were fairly opaque, largely due to the destruction wrought by the conquering Spanish. In the 1980s, after intense effort by Mayanist scholars, there was breakthrough after breakthrough in deciphering Maya glyphs, the written symbols that survived in codices, stone carvings, and pottery. One milestone was the examination of a remarkable ancient vessel, which was found, by an unlikely party, to contain chocolate. See — "Archaeologists, Mayanists and

Hershey's collaborated to reveal this ancient vessels secrets," by **Anne Ewbank**.

UVA Library, UVA Press Partner To Make Original Scholarship Freely Available (February 11, 2019) by **Anne E. Bromley**, <anneb@virginia.edu> — A new partnership at the **University of Virginia** aims to solve high costs and to make new knowledge more readily available — and free. Called "**Aperio**," the new digital publishing partnership between the **University Library** and **University of Virginia Press** employs

continued on page 34