

## Book Reviews

### ***Self-Publishing and Collection Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Libraries.***

Robert P. Holley. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2015. 198pp. ISBN 9781612494432

“Language is a virus from outer space.” That line, from Beat author William S. Burroughs, leads off the first chapter of this essay collection and indicates that what follows will not be your typical academic monograph. Libraries are indeed undergoing an invasion: Almost half a million self-published books were released in 2013, according to bibliographic data provider Bowker. They pose yet another challenge to libraries pressed for money and librarians pressed for time.

Although cracks are developing in the traditional walls that have kept self-published books (or “indie books”) out of libraries, exactly how this new species of work will, or should, fit inside remains an open question. *Self-Publishing and Collection Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Libraries*, edited by Robert P. Holley, is a sprightly, jargon-free introduction to this under-explored topic. Holley claims it is the first monograph to deal with self-publication.

This volume includes unique chapters from library staffers who are also self-published authors, making for an interesting hybrid work. Appealingly informal essays address both the problems (lack of book reviews, lack of discoverability, budget constraints) and possibilities (e-books, local engagement via local authors) of this new facet of the library field. The challenges of getting indie books into public and academic libraries -- the latter being the tougher nut to crack -- are addressed, and valuable, gritty details are provided about vendors, bibliographic

control, and metadata for independent books.

A fresh sense of discovery permeates the project, right from the foreword by Mitchell Davis, who, eschewing modesty, describes himself as an “early self-publishing visionary,” which is true -- he spawned Amazon’s CreateSpace and SELF-e. Davis gushes about this book: “I was happy to see the text depart from a strictly academic context to create a mesh of perspectives that let all range of libraries learn from the experiences of others.”

In his chapter one case study from the Los Gatos Library, Henry Bankhead explains that the phrase “self-published” is a little misleading, conjuring up an image of a garage full of unwanted books, unloaded upon an unsuspecting author by a money-grubbing “vanity press.” Today, mature platforms like Amazon CreateSpace and Smashwords are releasing increasingly professional-looking, credible material.

Melissa DeWild and Morgan Jarema bluntly detail the lingering weaknesses of the new format in chapter two, pointing out that “self-published books can be full of typos and have confusing storylines or unappealing covers.” Holley affirmed those flaws in chapter four, flaws that help explain why academic libraries have been slow to embrace self-publishing. He then turns to the potential virtue of indie books as a source of overlooked primary source material, or a way to provide comprehensive collections of less-famous works by significant writers.

Chapters 10 through 13 are penned by self-published authors, who discuss the challenges of getting their work into public libraries, either on a physical shelf or via the ubiquitous e-book format

OverDrive. Writer Tom Bruno includes helpful hints to authors about formatting your book to appeal to time-stretched librarians. Intriguingly, Bruno dates the impetus to work outside traditional publishing to even before the “self-publishing revolution.” He cites a ubiquitous creature that has long haunted public library circulation desks: “Had Stephen King unwittingly produced a legion of storytelling acolytes with his seminal book *On Writing*, which demystified the craft of writing to a generation....?”

In the concluding chapter, Joseph D. Grobelny evaluates additional reading in the new field and sums up the item in hand: “This volume will be a step toward an increased understanding of the advantages and pitfalls of self-publishing. Public libraries are starting to deal with this issue because of pressure from patrons who want to read self-published materials. Academic libraries are far behind.”

The burgeoning world of self-publishing turns out to be a surprisingly rich topic, one fraught with potential pitfalls, local angles, and surprising opportunities. This volume is a chatty, quirky way to get caught up.

*Reviewed by Clay Waters, Graduate Student, University of Alabama.*

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***Reimagining the Academic Library.*** David Lewis. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016. 170pp. ISBN 9781442238589

Academic librarianship is a constantly evolving field affected by technological innovation, the emergence of new modes of communication, and new forms of knowledge creation.

*Reimagining the Academic Library* could not have been published at a better time given the extent of changes libraries have experienced in recent decades. David W. Lewis presents a holistic picture of the forces that have caused unprecedented disruption to the ways academic libraries function today. The author utilizes Christensen’s theory of disruptive innovation as the foundation for the discussion of the emerging

trends current academic libraries are confronting, along with the steps libraries need to take to prosper in the digital age.

Force One, disruption, is rooted in the development of the Internet and subsequent transition of academic content from print to digital format. Lewis argues that the challenge facing academic libraries is to integrate available technologies into new business models. The growth of digital documents, which is Force Two, also makes traditional library practices obsolete. The unique attributes of fungible digital documents necessitate the creation of targeted management strategies to ensure that libraries can appropriately preserve and disseminate digital scholarship. Force Three explains the crisis of the scholarly monograph. While the future of the print book is uncertain, the change in this arena amounts to the need to produce academic output in a way that is cheaper, quicker, and easier. Force Four delineates the consequences of the expansion of the scholarly record for academic libraries. With the shift in the nature of contemporary scholarly records, which now include social media formats, comes the complexity of curating the exploding digital scholarship on the institutional level. Next, Lewis describes the relationship between research libraries and commercial journal publishers in economic and historical terms, implying that digital technologies have the potential to alter the status quo. Lewis is rightfully concerned about this relationship because inflated journal subscription prices place too much financial strain on library budgets. The final force addresses the changing demographics of the academic library workforce. It also illuminates how traditional work patterns give way to the need for more functional expertise in areas like assessment, data management, instructional design, and the creation of digital resources. Lewis posits that staff development is even more crucial than before for academic libraries to succeed.

The latter part of the book offers insightful and practical steps that provide a roadmap for academic libraries moving forward in the changing environment. Librarians should shift focus from building collections to providing

resources and services unavailable from the other segments of the academic enterprise. As centers of academic life on campus, libraries should repurpose their spaces by gradually retiring legacy print collections and creating a wide variety of technology-rich study settings that scaffold student collaborative learning, socialization, and research. Other steps include devising robust digital preservation infrastructure, making good business decisions that entail reforming the existing model of scholarly publishing for open access and purchase-on-demand practices, and, finally, learning how to leverage modern technologies to strengthen collaborations and make our work more effective. The six steps are easy to understand as they highlight the important role libraries play in the ongoing reconfiguration of the academic ecosystem. The key concept in Lewis' vision of a reimagined library is the shift of focus from collections to student engagement, knowledge sharing, and the entirety of the student college experience.

Lastly, Lewis provides compelling guidance on how to respond to the present-day challenges by listing “ten things to do” in the conclusion. This book makes a noticeable contribution to professional practice as it offers both a vision of the future and a specific action framework that all academic libraries should consider to remain relevant to their service communities.

*Reimagining the Academic Library* is a must-read and can be recommended for a wide range of audiences, including library and information science scholars, academic librarians, and administrators in higher education.

*Reviewed by Liya Deng, Social Sciences Librarian, Eastern Washington University.*

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**Fundamentals of Electronic Resources Management.** Alana Verminski and Kelly Marie Blanchat. Chicago: Neal-Schuman, 2017. 251p. ISBN 9780838915417.

*Fundamentals of Electronic Resources*

*Management* is the first book-length treatment of eresources management (ERM) since 2012's publication of *Managing Electronic Resources: A LITA Guide*, edited by Ryan O. Weir. In those five intervening years, ERM practices, priorities, and technologies, as well as the broader library landscape, have shifted enough to warrant a new general study of ERM. Timely and practical, this monograph tackles standard topics such as acquisitions and licensing but also topics unaddressed in previous surveys, such as vendor relationships and marketing. First-time authors Alana Verminski, collection development librarian at the University of Vermont, and Kelly Marie Blanchat, electronic resources support librarian at Yale University, have distilled the essentials of eresources management into a reader-friendly, comprehensive, first-rate study.

The book's purpose is to “provide both new and seasoned professionals with a practical foundation in electronic resources management” (vii). Over ten chapters, it fulfills this mission with aplomb. The first chapter is a brief overview of ERM, outlining the scope and context of the work. Chapter 2 tackles the various e-resource acquisition models: Big Deals, packages, perpetual access, pay-per-view, and more. Chapter 3 looks at evaluation, including e-resource trials and cost per use. Chapter 4 reviews integrating open access e-resources into ERM processes. Chapter 5 itemizes license terms and how to negotiate them. Chapter 6 examines setting up and maintaining access to eresources, once acquired. Chapter 7 looks at usage data, collection, and interpretation. Chapter 8 consists of tips on how to build relationships with vendors and ask the right questions—an approach that plays to Blanchat's background as a former Springer account specialist. Chapter 9 is about marketing eresources. Chapter 10 summarizes trends and changes in the field. Appendices comprise an open access resource rubric and a licensing checklist, both adapted from the University of North Texas, along with a glossary of ERM terms that very helpfully appear in bold font the first time each appears in the text. Ebooks, ejournals, and databases are all electronic resources for the purposes of this book; library systems and tools that support eresources-management are

addressed only in passing.

Any overview is bound to skip over some points. One such point, is preservation: How do libraries track and ensure ongoing access to eresources they have purchased in perpetuity? As electronic formats mature and as libraries invest more and more in perpetually owned content, preservation will become a core concern with which every eresources librarian must wrestle eventually. Blanchat and Verminski take a topic-based approach, rather than a cyclical, lifecycle-driven approach such as Jill Emery and Graham Stone's *Techniques of Electronic Resource Management (TERMS)*, or a skills-based approach like NASIG's *Core Competencies for Electronic Resources Librarians*. This topic-based approach makes for a diffusive quality that gels best if readers arrive with a basic understanding of e-resources management.

New professionals will appreciate *Fundamentals*. Current and prospective MLIS students can read it to familiarize themselves with a major potential career path once they graduate. New eresources staff can read this book to understand the full sweep of their daily responsibilities. Librarians who supervise eresources staff, but who are not experienced eresources managers themselves, can read this monograph so as to write fully informed personnel evaluations. Librarians not working in ERM can read this book to grasp the complexities of their colleagues' work fully. Seasoned eresources managers will find themselves jotting notes to help them refine their practices. There is something here for everyone.

In short, *Fundamentals of Electronic Resources Management* is a valuable overview. It is, the very first book-length treatment of eresources management since 2012. This monograph holds broad appeal for anyone who is interested or involved in eresources management, including graduate students, supervisors, and eresources staff. Highly recommended.

*Reviewed by Michael Rodriguez, Licensing and Acquisitions, University of Connecticut.*

***Critical Information Literacy: Foundations, Inspiration, and Ideas***. Annie Downey. Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2016. 204pp. ISBN 9781634000246

Dr. Annie Downey's book *Critical Information Literacy: Foundations, Inspirations, and Ideas* arrives at a time in which the importance of information literacy has entered the mainstream cultural conversation. In a hyper-partisan political climate in which the value of fact-based information is regularly attacked or outright denied, Downey's book is a timely reminder that librarians have a key role to play in teaching students how to problematize, critically examine, and assign value to the information they both consume and produce. Though Downey writes that there is no agreed upon definition of critical information literacy, she uses Accardi, Drabinski, and Kumbier's definition as a guidepost throughout the book. According to their definition, critical information literacy is "a library instruction praxis that promotes critical engagement with information sources, considers student collaborators in knowledge production practices (and creators in their own right), recognizes the affective dimensions of research, and (in some cases) has liberatory aims" (Downey, p. 42). Critical information literacy's student-centered approach moves away from the skills-focused, mechanistic aspects of traditional information literacy, and instead works to empower students to recognize, problematize, and disrupt the "cultural, social, and economic structures that underlie all of information production and dissemination" (Downey, p. 18).

As part of a growing body of literature on critical librarianship, one of the book's primary aims is to empower librarians to practice critical information literacy, both in the classroom and in the community.

Downey begins by outlining the theoretical foundations on which critical information literacy is built, including experiential education theories and practices, especially Paulo Freire's work on critical pedagogy and Jack Mezirow's theory of transformative learning. To ground the theory in real-world practice, Downey incorporates interviews with librarians who practice critical

information literacy throughout the book, which proves an effective way to demonstrate how critical information literacy can work in context. She outlines approaches for teaching critically, including creating a student-centered working environment, dialoguing, and problem-posing methods and she provides numerous examples of how to integrate critical content in the classroom, including critical source evaluation, teaching knowledge production and dissemination, and problematizing keyword and subject search terms. Downey's approach makes critical information literacy seem accessible and practicable, especially to librarians new to critical librarianship and critical pedagogy theory.

Downey also outlines some of the barriers faced in teaching critical information literacy and acknowledges that it can be challenging for librarians to implement critical information literacy given the nature of the one-shot library instruction session. She argues for expanding critical information literacy at the institutional level when possible, though she acknowledges the obstacles there too, including insufficient time, lack of administrative support, and turf issues with teaching faculty. She encourages librarians to grow beyond their traditional roles to foster deeper relationships with faculty, especially in disciplines with a natural tie-in to critical information literacy, but also in disciplines such as the sciences and professional disciplines, where critical information literacy might seem less of a natural fit. Building trust with faculty and sharing expertise, she argues, are keys to successfully implementing critical information literacy in the library classroom (Downey, p. 140).

As Downey reminds us in her conclusion, libraries are not neutral, nor should they pretend to be. In an era of information (and disinformation) overload, individuals must have "a strong understanding of how information is created, organized, distributed, and accessed" (Downey, p. 13) to become active, engaged citizens. Her book is an important reminder of librarians' responsibility in helping develop an informed, participatory citizenry. It is an excellent entry point for librarians new to critical librarianship and a welcome addition to the

literature for those already familiar with critical librarianship theory and practice.

*Reviewed by Emily Deal, Distance Learning & Virtual Services Librarian, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.*

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***Engaging Diverse Learners: Teaching Strategies for Academic Librarians.*** Mark Aaron Polger and Scott Sheidlower. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2017. 164pp. ISBN 9781440838507

Mark Aaron Polger's and Scott Sheidlower's *Engaging Diverse Learners: Teaching Strategies for Academic Librarians* explores how librarians can employ different strategies that engage different types of learners in the library classroom. It does not serve as a "how to teach" guide as much as it offers practical teaching advice and strategies.

Polger and Sheidlower's book offers a practical approach to teaching, as they explain strategies specifically for the library classroom. After reading this book, the librarian should have a toolbox of techniques, theories, and ideas to make their teaching more engaging in the classroom.

Each chapter of the book covers one of three topics: (1) theories on education and engagement, (2) practical teaching techniques to engage diverse learners, or (3) the research questionnaire that the authors administered and analyzed.

The authors discuss the different learning styles of students and how we can best reach them. Engaging students effectively is much different than it was in the past, and the authors do an effective job at explaining the reasons that are the case. As an educator, it works so much better if you can use the method that best suits the group of students you are teaching.

While many of the ideas in the book focus on

engaging students and understanding their different learning styles, Chapter 6 highlights understanding disengagement. It gives multiple ideas on how to keep students engaged in the library. Also, it covers why students may not feel engaged during library instruction. This chapter would be great for any librarian to read, as we do not always know how to grab and hold student's attention during a "one-shot" session. One idea that Polger and Sheidlower mentioned was that the more closely the lesson is crafted to the student's actual assignments, the more closely they will pay attention and be fully engaged. If there is no assignment, then the level of engagement will usually drop. It is a librarian's hope that students will understand that information literacy is a fundamental part of a learner's education.

One point the book makes is how librarian's need to consider how the library is viewed on campus. Is it a place that users want to go? Or do they consider it a place that doesn't have anything to offer them? An idea that is mentioned as effective is incorporating engagement when marketing an information literacy program. Polger believes that engagement and marketing are interrelated. If the academic library is considered the heart of the campus, it should be a priority for librarians to engage their users, so it feels like another home for them. If students are not engaged, then understanding the value of the library will be lost.

The final chapter of the book illustrates engagement as a set of behaviors and practices used to promote information literacy to classroom faculty. The chapter focuses on how librarians can incorporate engagement as part of their marketing strategy when promoting information literacy as a fundamental part of a learner's education.

While the ideas in the book may be in use by experienced librarians, the text will still be useful to librarians who are looking to change or develop new strategies for engaging their

students. It will be a valuable resource for new instruction librarians, as it lays a solid foundation that can be built upon for years to come. This book serves as a great starting point for instructors when creating ideas for their lessons. There are many tools that any instructor can add to enhance their teaching strategies.

*Reviewed by Jessica Spooner, Electronic Resources Librarian, SUNY Canton.*

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