Book Reviews

Kirsch, Breanne. (2018). *The LITA Guide to No or Low-Cost Technology Tools for Libraries.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kirsch's previous contributions to the library literature include innovative ways to use gaming in libraries, as well as intergenerational cooperation in the library workforce. Here Kirsch focuses her sights on the use of free or low-cost technology tools for library purposes under a rubric of eight key sections divided into two parts. In Part 1, she examines technology tools that help with creating videos, producing screencasts, collaboration, and assessment. The selected categories are timely and relevant. As anyone who has viewed instructional videos with monotone voice-overs can attest, video creation is an art which many are still trying to master, and libraries with limited budgets often cannot afford the pricier video creation options available. In her first chapter, Kirsch sets a pattern that remains constant throughout the book; every section offers an in-depth look regarding at least two technology tools in each category, followed by a broader discussion of alternative tools available. Every section is also equipped with a "real- world examples in libraries" area to give the reader a better idea of the tool's practical applications, as well as a "wrapping up" section to offer key takeaways from a given chapter. Strategically placed screenshots in each chapter provide extra context and guidance for her discussion of each technology tool.

Kirsch stays firmly aware of the differing applicability of tools based on the library type and the library audience. For example, in her chapter on using technology tools for presentations, Kirsch compares a simpler, streamlined tool (Emaze) to a more advanced tool with a steeper learning curve (Academic Presenter). This approach imbues a sense of usefulness for both the novice and the more firmly established librarian technophile looking for new technology tools to add to their belt. Part 2 focuses on technology tools for presenting, marketing, image editing or design, and digital storytelling. Kirsch utilizes her awareness of three key considerations which librarians care about deeply, and which companies creating technology tools do not always take into proper consideration: copyright, accessibility, and privacy. For instance, in illustrating how to use Spark, a graphic design tool for digital storytelling, Kirsch addresses issues of using the tool while maintaining privacy, as well as how to utilize copyright-friendly images. In her chapter on video creation, Kirsch details methods for improving the technology tool's accessibility features, which is particularly relevant as libraries serve an increasing number of individuals with a variety of disabilities.

To sum up, although the world of technology tools is ever-changing, this book provides a way for any librarian to surge back into the fray and continue innovating. The broad array of purposes served in the technology tools chosen for the book offers value across all types of libraries. Too often in the library field it can be difficult to pinpoint promising areas of technology in which to invest finite resources or energy. This book provides a useful tool for doing just that.

Reviewed by Bradley Lola, Public Services Librarian, University of South Carolina Upstate.

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Hitchcock, D. (2017). *Patent Searching Made Easy: How to do Patent Searches on the Internet and in the Library,* 7th edition. Berkeley, CA: Nolo

Patent Searching Made Easy is a thorough primer, written without excessive legalese, which has a direct focus on breaking down the patent searching process. This work acts as a guide for the user to evaluate the patentability of an idea. It instructs its users on performing the most effective online patent and prior art searches as well as techniques for navigating several online patent and trademark databases. While *Patent Searching Made Easy* can help readers avoid some of the need for professional patent searching help, particularly at the preliminary stages of searching, it is explicitly NOT a guide for individuals to go through the patent application process themselves. This topic is covered in depth within publisher Nolo's other patent work, *Patent it Yourself (Pressman & Tuytschaevers, 2016).*

Patent Searching Made Easy is divided into three main sections, The Basics, Simple and Advanced Searching, and Resources. The first part of The Basics provides a helpful general overview about patents and prior art as well as the criteria for the patentability of an invention. It is important to note that this book is written from the perspective of US patent law and may not necessarily be applicable when investigating international patent information. This section provides an adequate and succinct briefing on the nature of patents that should be helpful to anyone new to working with intellectual property. What may be less helpful, particularly for trained librarians, is the second portion of The Basics, which describes in detail the nature of using keywords in a search engine. It includes a lengthy description of Boolean operators and special characters used for substituting letters as well as the seemingly obvious topic of what types of internet connections one can use to access a patent database (any internet connection).

The next section, Simple and Advanced Searching, provides detailed instructions for searching the most popular online patent

databases: the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), The European Patent Office (EPO), and Google Patents. It contains text and comprehensive screenshots that describe many aspects of the searching process. While much of this material is freely available through online tutorials and videos (including those found on the USPTO and EPO websites), it may have appeal to learners who prefer moving at their own pace or just having a physical book. The downside to this approach is that new editions of the book must be purchased when changes are made to the underlying resources. Once again it should be noted that the directions are at times remedial for anyone familiar with online database searching.

The book concludes with descriptions of further resources, some of which can be accessed online and others that require a visit to a Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC), as well as forms for practicing patent searching and a glossary of terms. Overall, *Patent Searching Made Easy* is a worthwhile reference work that can be used to provide reliable patent information and search strategies. It provides simple, step by step guidance that would allow even the most novice user to navigate the major online patent databases. The caveat is that advanced search tactics are totally neglected, and portions of the book could be applied to searching any database rather than specialized patent collections. This book should be most useful for librarians new to working with inventors and intellectual property, those unfamiliar with performing prior art searches, and community members who would like to expand their patent knowledge.

References:
Pressman, D., & Tuytschaevers, T. J. (2016). *Patent it Yourself: Your Step-by-Step Guide to Filing at the U.S. Patent Office* (18th ed.). Berkeley, California: Nolo.

Reviewed by Mitch Winterman, Reference and Instruction Librarian, University of Nevada, Reno.

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Accardi, M. (2017). *The Feminist Reference Desk: Concepts, Critiques, and Conversations (Gender and sexuality in information studies*: no. 8). Sacramento, California: Library Juice Press.

Edited by Maria T Accardi, *The Feminist Reference Desk* is the most recent book in *The Series on Gender and Sexuality in Information Studies* published by Library Juice Press. Through anecdotes, research papers, and poetry, this book takes a practical and engaging approach on how librarians work with patrons at the reference desk, as well as how we feel about ourselves while doing so. New library professionals will appreciate the quick pace of the writing, the narrative style, and the practical steps given in this book.

Feminist values such as caring, community, empowerment, and the value of lived experience are essential when engaging with patrons at the reference desk. The various authors of this book discuss different values, with an authentic voice, regaling us with what went right, and many instances when things went wrong. Many chapters feature the voices of reference librarians or library school students directly quoted, demonstrating the importance of listening to individuals and placing their experiences at the forefront of scholarly communication. My favorite instance of this was a chapter on training student workers on the reference desk where all the students commented on the chapter in the footnotes. Their insights grounded the chapter with their unique perspective and humor.

While the book is not a course in feminist theory, it is full of wonderful examples of feminist theory put to work. Chapters examine how libraries are upholding the status quo through neutrality, how Libguides and zines can be powerful in subverting the traditional ways of learning, and how the intersectionality of race, gender, class, and social justice all meet at the reference desk. As someone new to feminist theory, I could easily understand this applied study, even without any prior background in it.

One of my favorite quotes from the books is that, "feminist pedagogy pushes us to try new things without a guarantee of success or control" (p. 108). As a new librarian, it is easy to want to stick to tried-and-true methods of reference, instruction, and other aspects of librarianship, holding on to control with everything I have. But when we embrace a beginner's mindset and look at our roles with fresh eyes, there are many new and exciting ways to approach librarianship. Libraries are changing every day; *The Feminist Reference Desk* illuminates this as something exciting, rather than something to fear.

The book shares these stories of success and failure to encourage more librarians to bring feminist values to the reference desk. When we are talking with a patron, are we having a conversation or engaging in a transaction? Are we seeing each student, community member, or teacher as an individual with a myriad of facets, or as a problem to be solved? For me this book transformed how I see myself as a librarian and has already informed, validated, and encouraged the way I see my daily work at the reference desk. As a new librarian, I am inspired by this work to be a great reference librarian while also being the best and most authentic person I can be.

*Bonus: I counted two Hamilton references in the book, how many can you find?

Reviewed by Jessica Martinez, University of Idaho.