

Libraries around the world are busy developing digitization projects for two crucial reasons—to improve access and preserve collections. These digitization projects vary in size and scope and are frequently coordinated efforts among numerous collecting institutions or library consortia. In the wake of this rush to digitize materials, the Web has several sites that offer useful information on digitization and imaging technology. Not only is the information available on Web sites scattered across the Internet, many of the current Web-based resources deal with specific digitization issues and collections. Fortunately, several print publications are now available, including Kenney and Rieger’s Moving Theory into Practice and Lee’s Digital Imaging, to better serve information professionals seeking an overview of digital imaging.

Although both resources offer insights on various aspects of digital imaging and project management, each book reaches for a different level of user; thus they contrast widely in scope and presentation. Kenney and Rieger are the editors and main authors of a resource that is a joint effort between Cornell University and the Research Libraries Group. The text includes the input of fifty highly respected contributors, and it is intended to guide professionals having some prior experience or knowledge of digital imaging. This book successfully combines the approach of a handbook for digitization project managers with the components of a technical manual. Chapters on digital benchmarking and quality control (which include quick overviews of color theory, resolution assessment, and applying other image-quality standards) are presented to instruct and guide readers on the complex processes of image creation and digitization technology. Other chapters round out the publication with discussion of such important management issues as improving delivery and access to digitized collections, the functions of metadata, and developing improved systems to handle image management.

As the sole author and editor of Digital Imaging, Stuart D. Lee’s intention is to provide a digital imaging handbook for relative beginners. Lee presents introductory summaries of the main issues and considerations involved in digitization, but particularly focuses on providing his readers with a guide for initiating digital imaging projects. His book is laid out as a series of steps from the first questions concerned with beginning a digitization project—the why, where, and how of digitization—to the cataloging and delivery of a digital collection. Sprinkled within five larger chapters are examples, definitions, and explanations of essential concepts and issues involved in digital imaging technology, but with the focus on how they affect the management of a digitization project.

There are several notable and helpful features in both books. Kenney and Rieger’s publication is very well organized; it is apparent that much thought went into planning how to present complex technical information in a clear, easy-to-follow style. Readers will appreciate the prudent addition of tables, graphs, photographs, and other illustrations that provide crucial examples for a text on the subject of digital imaging. Particularly helpful and informative are sidebars found throughout the book. Each separately authored sidebar focuses on a specific topic, and many of them are excellent summaries or offer useful advice on important aspects of digitization technology or image management. Lee’s contribution is also quite easy to follow, and he is a master at taking rather intricate subjects and explaining them in layman’s terms. The author’s ability to simplify in a nonpatronizing manner is certainly an appealing aspect of an imaging handbook aimed at beginners. Another noteworthy feature of Lee’s book is three appendices that list Web sites, questionnaire forms, and references (many of them URLs), which the reader can access for a plethora of information on digital imaging.

Neither book covers one important area, the funding of digitization projects, beyond a cursory degree. Both books do discuss methods of calculating the costs of a digital project, noting that digitization can be quite an expensive enterprise for a library. Although each publication mentions funding mainly as a factor in formulating or restricting a digitization project, neither offers much in the way of information about the methods of obtaining funding or grants. While it is understandable that space is limited and certain issues could not be included in books on digital imaging, funding to pay for staff and equipment for digitization projects are prevalent concerns for many libraries. It would have been advantageous if the topic of funding and the process of securing grants had been further explored, perhaps by offering an index of Web sites for funding opportunities available from national, state, and local granting authorities.

Digital Imaging and Moving Theory into Practice are both instructional texts that present a wealth of information on digital imaging without overwhelming their respective
audiences. Each book is intended for library and archive professionals to consult as they work with digital imaging, and both accomplish this goal. Digital Imaging is highly recommended as an introduction to digital imaging or as a starter text for beginners embarking on digitization projects. Moving Theory into Practice is also strongly recommended for those with some experience or knowledge of digitization, yet it can also serve as a valuable reference for more experienced professionals working in the digital imaging field.—Steven Carrico (steccarr@mail.uflib.ufl.edu), University of Florida Library, Gainesville, Fla.


"Electronic resources present opportunities for catalogers to reexamine how they organize information," Hsieh-Yee states in the concluding chapter of Organizing Audiovisual and Electronic Resources for Access: A Cataloging Guide (264). In this book, she suggests and describes new ways to treat the new formats and material types for which today’s catalogers are struggling to provide access.

Hsieh-Yee’s terminology “organizing . . . for access” describes what catalogers do when they create bibliographic records and avoids the negative connotations that may be associated with “cataloging.” However, “organizing” could mean simply the physical arrangement of materials on the shelf—which is, of course, what classification accomplishes. The subtitle, “A Cataloging Guide,” implies that this book provides guidance for cataloging; in fact, Hsieh-Yee ranges into numerous related areas, including how audiovisual materials are shelved: “A 1998 study of the top 100 public and academic libraries found public librarians expressing a commitment to browsing and 99 percent shelved sound recordings by format, while 94 percent shelved videorecordings by format” (12) and what libraries collect: “A recent survey found that 100 percent of the academic library respondents collect computer files and 93 percent of the public library respondents collect computer files” (121).

In her introductory chapter, “Organization of Information and Cataloging,” Hsieh-Yee discusses the information transfer cycle, principles of information organization, and the principles of cataloging and organizing audiovisual and electronic materials. She follows with an overview of cataloging that “students new to cataloging will need to know to be prepared for the next few chapters” (7). The following chapters are devoted to cataloging sound recordings, videorecordings, computer files, interactive multimedia, and Internet resources, with a chapter for each type of material. In the concluding chapter, Hsieh-Yee discusses changes in scholarly communication, today’s information users, publishing, the OCLC’s CORC (Cooperative Online Resource Catalog) project, and metadata.

In the individual chapters on cataloging, “[e]ach chapter begins with an introduction, followed by a discussion of current standards and examples for descriptive cataloging, choice of access points, and subject analysis. Each chapter concludes with analyses of 10 fully cataloged records” (7). These chapters are formatted well with boxed examples in MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging) format. However, typed text from the item is provided instead of an image of the chief source of information itself (title screen, beginning and ending credits, sound recording or compact disc label, Web site screen, etc.). Exact representations of information as it appears on the piece would have been much more effective.

There are errors in some of the cataloging examples and explanations. For instance, in discussing the 245 field for a videorecording of the motion picture Mary Poppins, Hsieh-Yee notes, “The name of the company, Walt Disney Company, is recorded here to indicate this is a corporate body” (117). According to Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, (AACR2R 7.1F1), catalogers are to “transcribe statements of responsibility . . . as instructed in 1.1F,” which says, “Transcribe statements of responsibility appearing prominently in the item in the form in which they appear there” (AACR2R 1.1F1). “Walt Disney Company” is nowhere on the title screen representation of this example (114–115). It appears only as “Walt Disney” and “Walt Disney Pictures.” According to the rules, use of the word “company” in the 245 field of this record is incorrect. In another example, a bibliographic record for the videorecording A Century of Women (108), includes a date qualifier in the note field (511 3 Jane Fonda, $d 1937–) that should be in the added entry field, but is absent (700 1 Fonda, Jane).

Hsieh-Yee, an associate professor in the School of Library and Information Science at Catholic University of America, has been teaching cataloging for nearly a decade. Her stated objective in this book is “to help students, catalogers, educators, and anyone new to these media gain competency in cataloging them. The book is designed both for self-study and for classroom use” (7). Unfortunately, the text is not very well written and there are annoying repetitions. If I were a student, I would want better explanations; if I were a teacher, I would want a better-written text and error-free cataloging examples. How can a student new to cataloging learn from statements such as: “The directory refers to a block of data following the leader that lists the tags.