Book Reviews

Edward Swanson, Editor


This collection of papers addresses a topic of great concern to most libraries—the cataloging of electronic serials—and while the field is rapidly changing, these articles go a long way toward building an understanding of the many issues surrounding electronic serials.

The editors organized the book into six sections that approach the topic of electronic serials from many aspects. The first section addresses general issues, and the bulk of it is a chapter by Ann Copeland that provides an excellent historical context for this topic through a review of the literature in the 1990s. Copeland’s discussion of the early days of electronic serials cataloging, multiple versions, standards development, and metadata helps to set the stage for the rest of the book.

The second section of the book addresses the topic of standards through two chapters. Françoise Pellé in “ISSN: An Ongoing Identifier in a Changing World” and Sten Hedberg in “ISBD(ER) and its Role in the Management of Electronic Resources” discuss the historical evolution of the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and the International Bibliographic Description for Electronic Resources (ISBD[ER]). Both authors make the case for the need for standards and their role in the improved control of and access to electronic serials as they develop in a rapidly changing bibliographic landscape. Both chapters are well written and contribute substantially to this compilation.

Educational topics constitute the third section of the book. Taemin Kim Park’s chapter on “The Integration of Electronic Resources into Cataloging Instruction in the LIS Curriculum” presents the results of Park’s research and investigation into the extent to which those forty-five library schools that have their course catalogs available on the Web address cataloging topics in general as well as electronic serials cataloging. This investigation provides a useful snapshot of the current state of affairs in today’s library schools and shows a range of practice regarding the teaching of cataloging courses. Arlene Taylor’s chapter on “Teaching Seriality: A Major Educational Challenge” illustrates the difficulty of teaching serials cataloging to library school students in one semester. She emphasizes that the implementation of logical cataloging rules will help to make the education of future catalogers easier. Park’s and Taylor’s chapters are the strongest of this section. In the third chapter, Elena Romanuk describes how the Serials Cataloging Cooperative Training Program (SCCTP) came to Canada, providing much-needed training in serials cataloging to librarians who would not have been able to travel from remote locations. She applauds the offering of such courses regionally in order to address these needs. In the final chapter of this section, Danielle Hinton describes the development of an electronic journals tutorial at the University of Leicester. The tutorial addresses topics such as the different types of journals, how to locate an electronic journal, understanding access issues such as passwords, the differences between on- and off-campus access, and copyright restrictions. While this is an interesting and useful project, the chapter seems to be out of place in a book about electronic serials cataloging.

The fourth section of the book covers policies and procedures and is the heart of the book. Wayne Morris and Lynda Thomas discuss the use of single or separate records for electronic and print versions of serials. They use the University of Glamorgan’s library experience to illustrate their thesis that the separate record approach for each electronic and print version provides better access to serials. While many might disagree with their conclusions, their analysis is interesting and well developed. In the next chapter, John Blosser, Tim Hagan, and Yvonne W. Zhang provide an annotated bibliography of Web resources that support the cataloging of electronic serials and other continuing resources. This should prove to be a useful resource for readers who are interested in learning more about the topic. Jeanne M. K. Boydston and Joan M. Leysen present the results of a survey of Association of Research Libraries (ARL) members regarding what is being cataloged at ARL libraries and by whom. Their results should inform other libraries that are assessing what their electronic resources. This tutorial addresses topics such as the different types of journals, how to locate an electronic journal, understanding access issues such as passwords, the differences between on- and off-campus access, and copyright restrictions. While this is an interesting and useful project, the chapter seems to be out of place in a book about electronic serials cataloging.

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alogue the relatively new forms of publications such as electronic serials and other integrating resources like free Web sites. Beatrice L. Caraway lists examples of the many types of notes that are present in cataloging records for electronic serials. While it is interesting to see the wide variety of ways in which catalogers indicate similar or identical concepts, it might have been helpful if Caraway had provided some analysis of these notes and perhaps indicated a preferred wording or format when possible. Gregory Wool, in “On Pins and Needles: Using Structured Metadata for Collocation and Browsing Capability,” discusses the four methods of providing structure in a catalog—cataloging rules, authority control, categorization, and relationship control—and how they enhance access and retrieval. This is a very stimulating discussion of the role of structured metadata in a catalog; although it does not seem to be directed to the topic of cataloging electronic serials. The principles that Wool discusses are applicable in all catalogs and, in that sense, they are relevant in the section of the book that is concerned with cataloging policies. In the final chapter of this section, Michael Wright describes OCLC’s Cooperative Online Resource Catalog (CORC). While this is a useful description of the CORC service, it is already a bit dated as many of the changes hinted at in the chapter have already occurred.

The fifth section of the book addresses the topic of national projects and local applications. The strongest chapters in this section are the final three. Nicole Hennig describes the development of a database that controlled and provided access to electronic serials and included all of the information required to manage electronic journals, such as licensing information. As the development of electronic journal management systems interests many libraries, this chapter should prove helpful to readers. Evelinde Hutzler and Gerald Schupfner describe the development of a similar database that provides access to electronic journals in a consortial environment in Germany. Finally, David King discusses the efforts of the Kansas City Public Library to manage control and access to their many aggregator titles.

The last section of the book, “Books, Serials, and the Future,” includes two chapters, the first of which, “E-Books: Should We Be Afraid?” by Susan Cleyle, discusses the development of electronic books, portable e-book readers, computer-based e-book readers, and Web-based e-book services. Although Cleyle draws parallels between the development of e-books and electronic journals and makes the case that libraries need to be involved in the ongoing development of e-books, this chapter feels out of place in this book. In the final chapter, “E is for Everything: The Extra-Ordinary, Evolutionary [E-]Journal,” Gerry McKiernan discusses the evolution of the scholarly journal and the many new features that electronic journals provide, such as electronic manuscript submission, refereeing and review, alerting services, personalized e-journals, display control, and more. This is an enlightening and stimulating chapter and, with its visionary theme, the appropriate conclusion to the entire book.

Overall, this book is an excellent addition to the literature on serials cataloging and would be a useful addition to libraries that do not already subscribe to The Serials Librarian.—Rebecca L. Mugridge (rlm31@psu.edu), Pennsylvania State University, University Park


This book, part of the Haworth Series in Serials and Continuing Resources, consists of eleven essays on issues facing those transitioning to electronic journals in library collections—more or less everyone working in a library. The issues include publishing, the use of subscription agents, cataloging, access methods, consortia, statistics, troubleshooting, reserves, accreditation, and databases. The contributors include practitioners in technical services, public services, and systems—all from academic libraries, with the exception of one from a law library—as well as representatives of a subscription agent. Although the book has a publication date of 2004, the content was submitted at the beginning of 2002.

Paul Harwood and Carolyn Alderson from Swets Blackwell in the United Kingdom open the collection with an overview of pricing, licensing, and alternative publishing models in the scientific, technical, and medical arena. They briefly describe the collaborative work of the International Coalition of Library Consortia in the United States and the National Electronic Site License Initiative in the United Kingdom in the areas of pricing, licensing, and usage statistics. There is unfortunately only a bare mention of alternative publishing models such as Paul Ginsparg’s Physics Archive, BioMed Central, and Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources (SPARC), but there is an extensive later chapter by Gerry McKiernan on open access.

Patricia A. Loghry provides a very useful summary exploration of the competing benefits and respective challenges of working with a subscription agent, a vendor/publisher, or a third-party provider in setting up access to electronic journals. Her conclusion is that electronic journals operations need to have a “metamediary”—a single point of contact for extended suppliers—who are the subscription agents. However, the agents need to continue to develop new services, and there needs to be standard-