

# Book Reviews

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*Usage Statistics of E-Serials.* Ed. David C. Fowler. Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth, 2007. 297p. \$40.00 soft cover (ISBN 978-0-7890-2988-1), \$70.00 hard cover (ISBN 978-0-7890-2987-4). Published simultaneously as *The Serials Librarian* 53, suppl. no. 9, 2007.

The drawback of many of Haworth's monographs that are copublished as journal issues is that while they are a collection of decent journal articles on a certain topic, they lack the cohesive sense that is characteristic of a monograph. *Usage Statistics of E-Serials* is a collection of "articles" authored by more than twenty-five people on a wide range of practical and theoretical topics related to usage statistics; read as a whole, the chapters are highly redundant in certain aspects, making reading the book in its entirety a monotonous endeavor. Almost every one of the seventeen chapters touches on the importance of usage statistics, how statistics can be used in decision making, how they help us understand users, the inconsistency of usage statistics, and definitions of COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources) and ICOLC (International Coalition of Library Consortia). Understandably, all these topics are relevant to a discussion of usage statistics, but the book would be a much more useful monograph if it began with a general introductory chapter outlining these basics followed by chapters delving into the viewpoints and experiences of each of the chapter authors.

Drawbacks aside, the book has many chapters that will be of interest to librarians (or students studying library and information science) who are new to the benefits and processes

(and problems) of collecting and analyzing the usage data that come from vendors and publishers. Eight of the chapters attend to the basics of how to do this. Chapter 1 addresses "practical considerations" related to the "processing, standardizing, and dissemination" of statistics (6). The chapter titled "Application of Electronic Serial Usage Statistics in a National Laboratory" nicely addresses how to evaluate a resource by analyzing usage statistics, and how to put that resource in context. Several other chapters concentrate on the methods of calculating and analyzing cost-per-use (or cost-per-download) and issues related to using the information in decision-making. Norm Medeiros, in "Uses of Necessity or Uses of Convenience? What Usage Statistics Reveal and Conceal About Electronic Serials," discusses the history of usage statistics and why we track use, but he also points out the pitfalls of "error-laden data" pertaining to cost-per-use information (237). Several authors stress the importance of using usage data to assist in formulating informed decisions on collections but caution against putting too much emphasis on usage data when making decisions to cancel resources. Rickey Best, author of the chapter "Lies, Damn Lies, and Usage Statistics: What's a Librarian to Do?" concludes that "understanding the limitations of usage data allows librarians the opportunity to integrate the data with collections policies, and to focus upon the needs of the user community" (212).

The remaining nine chapters delve into a wide variety of topics. Two of them address specifics related to products available to assist with collecting and managing usage statistics

(chapters 7 and 17); however, this book was published more than two years ago. Many more products are now available to libraries to assist them in managing electronic resources and usage. Of particular interest is the chapter "Shared Purchase-Shared Responsibility: A Stewardship Tool for Consistent E-Usage Evaluation," in which Susanne Clement shares her experience developing a model for managing centrally funded databases at the University of Kansas. The model involves assigning each centrally funded database a "steward" who annually assesses the scope, coverage, and usage statistics of the resource and investigates competing products. Chapters such as Heather Morrison's on the impact of usage statistics as an economic factor in scholarly communication, Eleonara Dubicki's on how statistics can help drive marketing resources to patrons, Susan Kendall and Celia Burke's on gathering usage statistics for government resources, and Carol Tenopir's on the MaxData project, which "seeks to determine how to engineer a system that adequately measures the effectiveness" of resources, demonstrate the broad range of issues related to usage statistics included in this book (73).

Elise Anderson's chapter, "The Next Steps in Developing Usage Statistics for E-Serials," is one of the best in the book. It touches on the basics of usage data (such as accessing, retrieving, and storing data) while looking to the future to assess ways to "develop and improve the utility of usage statistics" (245). Anderson offers ideas to solve a situation that is "ripe for improvement" (249) and discusses ways that bibliographers, collection managers, and library instructors

could collaborate to increase the usage of existing resources.

Without a doubt, *Usage Statistics of E-Serials* imparts the idea that collecting, assessing, and storing usage data involves time, personnel, and money. The book also stresses that usage statistics can inform much more than just collection management decisions. Used creatively, statistics can help librarians increase users' awareness of their existing resources, learn more about user needs and activities, and justify their budgets. Although this book was copublished as a *Serials Librarian* supplement, the chapters are not indexed anywhere that I could find, nor are they available electronically. What a shame. Most readers will find a portion of the book useful to them, but not the book as a whole.—*Karen Fischer, (karen-fischer@uiowa.edu), University of Iowa, Iowa City.*

**Newspapers Collection Management: Printed and Digital Challenges. *La gestion de colecciones de periodicos: desafios en impresos y digitales. Proceedings of the International Newspaper Conference, Santiago de Chile, April 3–5, 2007.*** Ed. Hartmut Walravens. Munich: K. G. Saur, 2008. 396p. \$152.00 (IFLA members \$114.00) (ISBN 978-3-598-22039-5). IFLA Publications, 133.

*Newspapers Collection Management: Printed and Digital Challenges* continues the tradition set by Hartmut Walravens, chair of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Newspaper Section, of publishing the proceedings of the various IFLA international newspaper conferences and section meetings. The focus of this book is on the meetings in Santiago, Chile, in May 2007 and at the section meetings at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Durban, South Africa, in August 2007.

The first part of the book centers

on conference papers presented in Santiago, Chile, which had a special focus on Latin American newspaper collections and looked at activities, needs, and various issues with which those libraries and countries have had to deal with as they take on more digitalization projects. The majority of the articles are presented in both English and Spanish, but a few articles are only in Spanish. These Spanish-only articles come from Mexico and Peru, and include a slideshow presentation from Thomson Gale. One article solely in English discusses the preservation and digitalization of Latin American newspapers in the United States. Other articles in Spanish and English come from authors in Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Colombia, Guatemala, as well as from Finland, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, the United States, France, Germany, and Spain. Topics cover a wide range of digitalization issues, but a large percentage of the articles focus on the history of printing in a particular country, the history and evolution of various digitalization projects, and projects that are currently underway. Chapters covering unique topics include “The Evolution of the Aboriginal Presses in Canada” by Sandra Burrows, “Colombian Newspapers of the 19th Century: Treasures and Memory” by Sandra M. Angulo Mendez, and “Cuban Newspapers in the XVIII and XIX Centuries: Conservation of Unique Existing Issues” by Hilda Perez Sousa. What these and other articles clearly illustrate is the passion, collaboration, time, and effort that librarians and libraries are putting forth in their efforts to save the past and make it easily available for their users.

The second section of the book includes the four papers that were given at WLIC in Durban, South Africa. Three articles cover newspaper collections at the National Library of South Africa, the Library of Congress Office in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Makerere

University Library in Uganda; the fourth looks at the future of African newspaper collections in American educational institution (which sadly shows that newspapers from a few countries from Sub-Saharan Africa are not being collected). These four articles also are presented in English and Spanish. Newspaper collections in Africa also deal with many of the same issues, such as microfilming, cost, new technology, indexing, and access, found in South America.

The book does a great job presenting new and interesting research, but readers might be disappointed with the lack of citations and documentation in many of the articles. Also, because these are conference papers, grammar, spelling, and style formats are not uniform.

This book is a fascinating account of what libraries around the world are doing with their newspaper collections and the many issues with which they deal in managing their digital, print, and microfilm collections. Ximena Cruzat Amunategui, director of the National Library of Chile, writes in her article that “digital libraries share many things with the ‘real’ (traditional, physical) libraries that we know and love: 1. It is focused on readers and patrons. Without readers, there can be no library. 2. It is more than a mere repository. It is a space for encounters and knowledge creation. The road is full of new challenges and discoveries, but the road itself is older than Alexandria” (11). While reading *Newspapers Collection Management: Printed and Digital Challenges*, one can easily see the new challenges and discoveries that await those on the digital road. This book is highly recommended for those libraries with newspaper collections, as well as those universities with archival, library science, and journalism programs.—*Melissa Aho, (ahox0017@umn.edu), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.*