

how the perceived value of the undertaking changed as the project moved along. Zorich illustrates this point in the chapter "Musings on the Museum Educational Site Licensing Project" by describing how, as costs began to outweigh benefits, museum interest in the project shifted from revenue generation to outreach. A secondary effect observed by several writers is participants' changed views of their jobs, their roles, and the ways they communicate within their institutions.

In the MESL Project, the predominant use of images was in art history classes; however, the act of viewing, such a self-conscious—and fraught—aspect of art scholarship, is not directly addressed. The educators' reports include some insights, but most are anecdotes; there are few references to theory or criticism. An interesting follow-up project to MESL would be distribution of images to courses in other disciplines concerned with the analysis of images, such as nonart history courses, graphic design, and cultural and media studies courses.

In sum, these two books are a reminder to those considering a digital imaging project to pay attention to data standards, be prepared to work closely with many other kinds of professionals, and have money and time. One is also reminded to reflect upon the effort, as NDLP legal advisor Melissa Smith Levine does when she asks if "historical changes that stemmed from technological innovation were always accompanied by such a conscious effort to predict the path of societal impact and to shape it" (*Images Online*, 73).—Jenny Tobias ([jennifer\\_tobias@moma.org](mailto:jennifer_tobias@moma.org)), *Museum of Modern Art Library, New York*.

**Basic Book Repair Methods.** By Abraham A. Schechter. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1999. 102 p. \$19.50 (ISBN 1-56308-700-6) LC98-50950.

Few libraries have the luxury of trained staff dedicated specifically to

the task of book repair. Most often this task is one of many assigned to technical services staff or handed off to volunteers. Training may be too distant or too expensive; staff are left to make up repairs on the fly—or attempt to learn techniques from a manual.

Abraham Schechter's *Basic Book Repair Methods* slips into a niche surrounded by manuals (Greenfield 1983; Kyle 1983; Morrow and Dial 1986; Lavender and Stockton 1992) that are becoming dated or out-of-print, are designed for the home hobbyist, or address repair as part of a preservation program for manuscript, rare, or special materials (Ritzenthaler 1993; Ogden 1996). Schechter states at the onset that his intended scope is limited to "general, nonvaluable materials" (vii). If time and resources are available, these repairs are equally appropriate in public, school, special, and research libraries.

*Basic Book Repair Methods* is a spare little book dedicated purely and simply to describing eight book repair techniques: cleaning paper, mending paper, book hinge tightening, repairing interior hinges, hinging-in pages, case and textblock attachment, cloth rebacking, and retitling. There is no discussion about setting up a work area, developing a repair program, or making decisions for book repair. Basic bench techniques, such as finding the grain direction of paper, cutting with a knife and straightedge, or handling a glue brush, are described, if at all, cryptically and in passing. The glossary is short, idiosyncratic, and apparently assembled without reference to standards for the field or for composing definitions. A list of suppliers, bibliography, and index supplement the text.

The range of techniques presented is appropriately selected to be both useful as solutions to common problems and within the scope of staff with beginning-to-intermediate skills and limited facilities and equipment. The text is brief; each section includes a

paragraph or two of introduction, a list of materials, a step-by-step narration of each repair, and occasionally a concluding comment. The instructions are usually adequate, in spite of the author's tendency to stretch words to fit his own meanings and to use slightly unconventional general, rather than technical, terms.

The manual's strongest feature by far, however, is its photographs. Since the author himself is the photographer, he has been able to compose and select his photographs to illustrate his point exactly: text and photo intertwine, each providing information that would be incomplete without the other. Unlike photos in other typical manuals, these are snapped from the operator's viewpoint, as if the author were working with a camera strapped to his forehead. It is unfortunate that in the reproduction some of the photos lose definition—a white endsheet fades into a white textblock—and become difficult to read. At their best the pictures are indeed worth a thousand words.

Some inaccuracies and misinformation have slipped into print. PVA adhesive, for example, is described as "Polyvinyl Acetate glue, which is manufactured to archival standards" (21). There are no such standards, and there are many varieties and qualities of PVA available. In the instructions "It is critical that the measurement of the width of the spine [inlay] be made against the width of the textblock, and the measurement of the length of the textblock be made against the boards of the case" (57), the second "textblock" should be "spine inlay"—a critical slip in describing this construction. Schechter misuses technical terms in describing chemical and physical properties of materials, using vague, common terms such as "acid-free" as if they have a specific technical definition.

With *Basic Book Repair Methods* in hand, can one learn to repair books without outside assistance? If endowed with reasonable manual dexterity,

patience, and willingness to “practice with expendable, non-collection materials” (vii), a beginner will find sufficient information to get started. But the sixteen blank pages for “Reader’s Notes” at the end of the book are a tacit assumption that much of the learning process will be and should be enriched through practice and contact with experienced book repair specialists. However, I am left wishing that someone knowledgeable in both editing and in book repair had taken a firm hand early in the preparation of this book, while respecting Schecter’s clear visual comprehension and commitment to simplicity. There is a need for this type of manual, but *Basic Book Repair Methods* is not that book.—Shannon Zachary (*szachary@umich.edu*) *The University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor.*

#### Works Cited

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