Book Reviews

Norm Medeiros

Essential Library of Congress Subject Headings. By Vanda Broughton. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2012. 278 p. $64.95 softcover (ISBN: 978-1-55570-640-1).

Essential Library of Congress Subject Headings provides just what the title proclaims—exactly that which is essential to the topic. More comprehensive books have been written on the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) with an advanced readership in mind. The author even recommends one: Lois Mai Chan's *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Principles and Practice*.[1] Although Chan's book analyzes LCSH in great depth, leaving no subdivision unturned, those readers without a solid cataloging background may feel confused and lost. In contrast, Broughton writes for the novice cataloger, library school student, and reference librarian or other library professional who wishes to understand the fundamentals of LCSH. No prior cataloging knowledge or experience is necessary to appreciate this book.

This is the third book in a series by the same author. Other titles, *Essential Classification* and *Essential Thesaurus Construction*, are similarly written for specific use in the cataloging and classification courses at University College London.[2] As a result, Broughton's audience is mainly British. In her preface, she explains that use of LCSH in the United Kingdom "is a relatively recent phenomenon, and there is no substantial history of library school education in the use of LCSH, or, indeed, of subject indexing or subject heading languages in general" (vii). Throughout the book, she often addresses the UK reader directly, noting differences between cataloging in a US institution and one in the United Kingdom. A table illustrating differences between US and UK terminology is included to show readers that when searching LCSH, they must search for US terminology rather than UK. One example she provides is the difference in definition between the terms "private schools" and "public schools" on either side of the Atlantic (20).

This is not to say that the book is not also helpful to audiences outside of University College, to those outside the UK, or to experienced catalogers already familiar with LCSH. General concepts are outlined simply, which makes the text a quick and enjoyable read. Broughton's style is both conversational and informative. She has a talent for relating the often-abstract concepts of subject headings to practical application. While the book may not be as exhaustive as related titles, it does a much better job of explaining LCSH in a way that is easy for professional catalogers to grasp quickly in the middle of their busy workday.

The author begins with a brief history of LCSH, which can be found elsewhere, most extensively in *The LCSH Century: One Hundred Years with the Library of Congress Subject Headings System*.[3] Broughton's abbreviated history leads to an overview of the basic principles behind LCSH and of the concepts behind subject heading lists in general. Perhaps the most interesting section of the book comes in chapter 3, "Subject Heading Lists and the Problems of Language," in which challenges of the English language are discussed in relation to subject cataloging. Here she answers the question, "What do words mean?" Synonyms and homonyms are addressed, as are the structural disadvantages of word-based systems. What follows is a how-to guide to LCSH, divided for the most part into chapters based on types of headings and types of materials cataloged.

Unfortunately, with the exception of one short chapter at the end, most of the text focuses on the print version of the five-volume *Library of Congress Subject Headings* instead of the online resource *Classification Web*.[4] The text's focus on this print resource, largely out-of-use in research libraries, is the book's main problem. Catalogers working primarily with *Classification Web* and other online resources will be left ill prepared if *Essential Library of Congress Subject Headings* is the only guide they consult.

The brevity of the text also is a disadvantage. Broughton briefly describes the establishment of name headings but does not mention the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) Name Authority Cooperative Program (NACO). Likewise, she briefly describes the establishment of geographic headings without much information about the PCC Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO). The inherent bias of LCSH is addressed, but not in depth. Other inconsistencies of LCSH, however, are discussed at length. For example, Broughton notes that some numbers are spelled out in their headings, such as "Fifth Avenue (New York, N.Y.)," but not all, such as "10 Downing Street" (29). No explanations are made for these inconsistencies, but the reader is given fair warning that they exist.

Bearing its faults in mind, *Essential Library of Congress Subject Headings* is still an important addition to the library of books available on LCSH. Detailed treatises on the subject abound, but Broughton has written a concise introduction. This may prove indispensable to those who are new to subject headings while also serving as a

quick reference guide to those already familiar with them.—*Melissa De Fino (mdefino@rulmail.rutgers.edu), Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.*

References

1. Lois Mai Chan, *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Principles and Application* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2005).
2. Vanda Broughton, *Essential Classification* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2004); Vanda Broughton, *Essential Thesaurus Construction* (London: Facet, 2006).
3. Alva T. Stone, *The LCSH Century: One Hundred Years with the Library of Congress Subject Headings System* (New York: Haworth Information, 2000).
4. Library of Congress, Cataloging Policy and Support Office, Cataloging Distribution Service, *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, 21st ed. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service, 1998); Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service, *Classification Web* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service, 2002–).

No Shelf Required 2: Use and Management of Electronic Books. Edited by Sue Polanka. Chicago: ALA, 2012. 254 p. $65 paperback (ISBN: 978-0-8389-1145-7).

Published a year after *No Shelf Required: E-Books in Libraries*, the prolific Sue Polanka has assembled a second collection on e-books in libraries.[1] *No Shelf Required 2* (*NSR2*) builds on the evidence that e-books are no longer a novelty for libraries; several chapters cite the *Library Journal* survey on e-book holdings for public and academic libraries and school media centers to document the growth of e-book holdings. Now that e-books are well established in libraries of all types, *NSR2* addresses issues beyond acquisition and application to include access, preservation, and integration. The result is maturation of the subject that is reflected in the content and the experience of the contributors.

Polanka is to be commended for assembling a diverse group of contributors. Of the sixteen chapters, six are written by academic librarians, four by school media specialists, and two by public librarians. The remaining contributors are a K–12 teacher, a publisher, a web developer, and a social worker. Just as the authors are primarily, but not exclusively, librarians, so is the expected audience primarily, but not exclusively, librarians—publishers, parents, teachers, and anyone who deals peripherally with e-books via their library will find a chapter or two of interest.

The first chapter gives an overview of four libraries that have gone "bookless." Librarians will be familiar with these as they include Cushing Academy and three academic libraries. What may be less familiar is how these libraries have uniformly repurposed former book space with service and student support space. This inaugural chapter is an appropriate launch for the rest of the book because it addresses the question, "If we have little or no physical materials, then what will define these spaces as libraries?" (1–2).

The first third of the book deals with access issues, the middle third with what might be loosely described as opportunities for libraries created by the proliferation of e-books, and the last third with e-reader implementation programs.

Access chapters address issues that apply to print books with an e-twist: weeding, *RDA*, and preservation.[2] They also cover issues unique to e-books that are perhaps infrequently considered by e-book managers. Chapter 2, for instance, addresses the digital divide from the viewpoint of a social worker, who suggests that e-books may actually inhibit access to information for the moderately poor because their use requires devices, readers, or Internet access. The chapter gives helpful insights into the limitations of households at the poverty line. Chapter 3 addresses access for the "print disabled," defined here as a "learning, visual or physical disability that makes it difficult or impossible to access print" easily (37). The chapter assumes some familiarity with libraries, web protocols, and disability standards, and is the longest and most detailed section of the book. Despite its density, this chapter provides a basic understanding of e-book accessibility issues for those who merely want to skim. Those needing a deeper understanding can learn about assistive technologies, the status of the National Information Standards Organization's (NISO) accessibility initiatives and the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and the current legal environment for e-reading in higher education.

Use of mobile devices—a critical topic as librarians increasingly respond to patron questions about downloading e-books to personal devices—is covered in chapter 4. Lisa Carlucci Thomas relates the 2009 Yale study of e-books on four mobile devices (two of which are no longer in popular use) in which Yale librarians tested access to their e-book content on twenty-five e-book platforms. Although the platforms and the rate of e-book acquisition will mirror that of many academic libraries, this chapter will be more useful as a model for similar studies in one's own library rather than for its outcome, which showed that 84 percent of Yale's e-book content could be read, at least minimally, on the devices tested. The chapter challenges librarians to learn about e-readers to stay at the forefront of technology.

Chapter 5 covers e-book preservation, a potentially lackluster topic that becomes fascinating in the hands of Amy Kirschoff of Portico.