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# Book Reviews

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***Managing Electronic Resources: A LITA Guide***. Edited by Ryan O. Weir. New York: Neal-Schuman, an imprint of ALA, 2012. 179 p. \$65 paperback (ISBN: 978-1-555-70767-X). LITA Guides, 20.

*Managing Electronic Resources* is exactly that: a guide to managing electronic resources in libraries. This guide is organized into eight chapters: two introductory chapters that briefly describe the e-resources life-cycle and the current environment in which electronic resources librarians find themselves; four chapters that describe in greater detail the particular components of the e-resources life-cycle; and two concluding chapters on the state of e-resource management staffing with a look ahead to what role e-resources management will play in the library of the not-so-distant future.

The first chapter opens with a broad overview of the e-resources life cycle, which ranges from evaluation through acquisition, and addresses accessibility, maintenance, and assessment. This chapter also provides some basic tips for new electronic resources librarians who are interested in both better organization of their daily tasks and furthering their professional development and career in e-resources. The introduction to the concepts of managing e-resources continues in chapter 2, in which the changing and challenging environment of collections is reviewed. A “more with less” approach is taken, which offers several options for providing access to prohibitively expensive resources, including interlibrary loan, pay-per-view, and patron-driven acquisitions. This chapter also contains suggestions to market e-resources on a small (or nonexistent) budget, and reviews open-source electronic resource management systems

(ERMS). A review of commercial ERMS would have been a valuable addition to this chapter, but in keeping with the “more with less” approach, no commercial ERMS are reviewed.

Chapters 3–6 provide a more in-depth look at the management of e-resources. In chapter 3, the expanding role of acquisitions in the realm of e-resources is examined. Particular attention is paid to the documentation of e-resource acquisitions because the responsibilities of acquisitions staff expand with electronic resources in contrast to print. Chapter 4 is a well-organized introduction to license negotiation, identifying and explicating key points in contract and copyright law for which familiarity is essential to the work of e-resources librarians. The chapter provides a detailed description of the basic components of a typical e-resource license, with tips and tricks to manage the negotiation and license execution process. Chapter 5 provides a seemingly exhaustive overview of the various ways libraries make e-resources accessible to their users, plus summaries of current and emerging authentication mechanisms, access points, troubleshooting, maintenance, and user experience considerations. Chapter 6 examines all aspects of usage statistics, from gathering data to analyzing and reporting statistical information about e-resources to stakeholders. Predictably, COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources) compliant usage data considerations garner the bulk of the chapter. Portions of this chapter that address COUNTER Code of Practice Release 3 are slightly out of date since *Managing Electronic Resources* was published just ahead of Release 4 of the COUNTER Code. However, the underlying practices to organize

and manage the data as described in this chapter continue to be relevant. The sections that examine creating meaningful statistics and effectively interpreting these statistics also are valuable.

Chapter 7 provides a welcome discussion of staffing levels to support e-resources management in light of the rising workload of e-resources librarians. This chapter provides a summary of the “soft” skills an e-resources librarian must cultivate, and ways to manage up, down, and across an organization to ensure that e-resources needs are adequately met. Anyone with an interest in team-building or learning to coach colleagues will find valuable techniques in this chapter; the management theories of appreciative inquiry, basic social styles, and backcasting are briefly summarized. In the final chapter, predictions regarding the near future of electronic resources are considered. These predictions are rather bold; many have been the unrealized predictions for the library of the future. However, the chapter provides some convincing arguments, such as predicting e-books will become the preferred format for book users, and that some libraries will cease purchasing print content altogether. The future of libraries will need to adapt to the ever-increasing ubiquity of e-content, and this future will affect far more than electronic resources librarians. This chapter predicts changes that will occur in all library divisions, including technical services, public services, and special collections.

*Managing Electronic Resources* is very well organized and provides clear, relevant examples of techniques to manage electronic resources that can be applied in academic, public,

and special libraries. The editor and contributors are careful to discuss techniques, best practices, and types of available tools without endorsing or delving too deeply into the nuances of specific systems used to manage e-resources—a wise decision considering the pace at which the e-resource landscape evolves. Writing a guide to managing e-resources that will remain relevant for longer than six weeks after publication is no easy feat; distinguishing underlying theories from coping mechanisms can be complicated. Weir and the contributing chapter authors have managed to do just this. The examples used in this guide and the practices they illustrate form a solid e-resource management text whose value will persist for years to come. —*Betsy Appleton (eapplet1@gmu.edu), George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia*

***Fundamentals of Managing Reference Collections.*** By Carol A. Singer. Chicago: ALA, 2012. 167 p. \$60 paperback (ISBN: 978-0-8389-1153-2). ALA Fundamentals Series.

This book is part of the ALA Fundamentals Series and may serve as a targeted supplement to more general collection development works. Since most libraries still have print reference collections and librarians are struggling to integrate electronic titles with existing print collections, the topics covered in this guide will be relevant to many practitioners. Singer herself says that the reference stacks are full of useful resources, but admits to rarely consulting them. She then posits that a leaner print collection might gain more use. Her information on maintaining reference collections covers not only strategies for taming the physical reference collection, but also suggestions for incorporating virtual materials into that reference collection and the additional challenges of managing electronic resources.

Singer divides her work into nine chapters: “Reference Collection

Fundamentals”; “Reference Collection Development Policies”; “Staffing Models for Reference Collection Management”; “Selecting Reference Materials”; “Acquisitions, Budgets, and Licenses”; “Collection Maintenance”; “Weeding the Reference Collection”; “Reference Collection Development and Consortia”; “Discovery and Access”; and a “Collection Development Policy Template” in an appendix.

Singer begins with some definitions of reference works and continues her discussion with the electronic aspect of reference collections. She then describes the relationship between print and electronic materials, and compares these two types of resources. Singer also considers how to define boundaries for both print and electronic collections. In the next chapter, Singer provides a rationale for a separate reference collection development policy, as well as a very thorough discussion of each of the desirable components of such a policy. The chapter on staffing applies only to larger libraries but clearly delineates centralized and decentralized models for managing reference collections. Singer also provides lists of advantages and disadvantages for both models.

The next topic is selection. Singer discusses some of the tools available to assist with selection and general criteria for choosing resources. She follows this introduction with specific selection criteria for different types of reference materials: online, aggregated reference book databases, freely available Internet resources, print monographs, and print serials.

In the following chapter, Singer provides a broad overview of the acquisitions process, including approval plans. With the exception of a reference to typing paper order forms, the workflows Singer outlines are fairly standard. She continues with a general discussion of various models for reference collection budgets. Singer then briefly covers some of the major components of licenses.

In the next chapter, the focus is on collection maintenance. Singer discusses potential workflows when new electronic resources are added (testing, branding, cataloging, etc.) as well as some of the ongoing challenges posed by collections of electronic resources, such as changing URLs and dropped content. When dealing with new additions to the print reference collection, older editions may need to be pulled or shifting may be necessary to accommodate new materials. Ongoing print collection maintenance may range from repairs and rebinding to inventory. Another facet of maintenance is marketing, both to library staff and library patrons. Singer advises that one should periodically attempt to examine the reference collection with fresh eyes to assess its adequacy.

Singer then tackles the sometimes dreaded topic of weeding. She delineates a number of the reasons offered for not weeding and counters with reasons why weeding is necessary. Singer then discusses some typical criteria for weeding, along with caveats about applying any single criterion as a hard and fast rule. Singer outlines two basic methods for weeding. The first strategy is to conduct a one-time major project with an established timeframe. The alternative is to organize an ongoing or continuous review of the collection without a firm deadline. She then reviews the pros and cons of each option. She provides a section covering the review of reference serials and another on weeding reference books in off-site storage, which is an issue primarily for larger libraries. The lingering question about the utility of off-site storage materials for reference tools is not addressed. Singer then discusses review of reference e-books and reference databases. She closes with some final tips for reluctant weeders.

In the next chapter, Singer discusses the role of consortia in building electronic reference collections. She notes budget implications ranging from potential savings to ongoing