Gould, rather than advocating for the abolishment of peer review, offers steps that can be taken to improve this important part of academia. Other authors have tackled this topic, and Gould cites many of them throughout his text and with references at the end of each chapter. This book would be useful for institutions discussing or reevaluating the peer review process, as well as those studying open access journals and online publishing.—Lynda Aldana (laldana@umbc.edu), University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, Maryland

Reference


From the title one may surmise that Jeannette Woodward’s book focuses on e-books in libraries, but The Transformed Library is actually a timely and accurate assessment of the state of libraries in today’s world relative to technology and economy. Woodward offers insightful advice to librarians on how to survive and thrive during these times of rapid technological transformation and dramatic budget cuts.

Woodward organizes this slim volume into nine chapters and includes an introduction, conclusion, and index. The first chapter, “Gutenberg Meets Kindle: The Arrival of Digital Books,” focuses on e-book use in libraries and provides a brief history of the shift from the printed to digital word. Chapter 2, “Libraries vs. E-Publishers: The Library’s Point of View,” discusses the difficult relationship that currently exists between publishers and libraries that circulate e-books; the author also addresses related issues involving e-media in this chapter. Chapter 3, “The Age of High Anxiety: Threats That Fuel Library Nightmares,” examines the effect of outsourcing on library constituents, specifically when local governments decide to outsource public libraries to save money. Chapter 4, “The Library in Cyberspace,” describes how libraries have fallen behind in communication and social networking technologies, and provides strategies for rectifying this situation. In chapter 5, “Will the Coffee Shop Save Us? The Library as Place,” explores how libraries can fulfill people’s need for a public place. Woodward contends that successful libraries are those that develop space from the patron’s viewpoint, and when cozy and warm spatial designs delight patrons and invite them to stay. In chapter 6, “Library Careers That Won’t Go Away,” Woodward advises librarians on how to develop marketable skills for an uncertain future. She also briefly advises library science programs on how to graduate marketable students who possess the requisite skill set for twenty-first-century information professionals. The next three chapters focus on survival strategies for different types of libraries: public libraries (chapter 7), academic libraries (chapter 8), and school libraries (chapter 9). Within these chapters, Woodward depicts different scenarios on how libraries could fail or succeed depending on how they adapt to the changing requirements of the communities they serve.

The main points Woodward repeats throughout her book are that libraries must not only evolve technologically to stay current with user needs, but they must also evolve spatially and programmatically. Libraries must stay customer-focused to maintain relevancy and garner community support, especially in these difficult economic times. These survival strategies also include workflow and daily task adjustments, and expanding hours of service. Such flexibility and customer-centric policies will result in patrons viewing their libraries as essential, and fighting to keep them financed.

Woodward’s viewpoint is not apocalyptic, but at times she is realistically grim, particularly in cases where libraries fail to be customer-oriented. She stresses that librarians must market themselves and their services, as constituents and financial decision-makers will not automatically recognize the value of information professionals. Librarians must reach out and educate said decision makers while garnering the support of those who benefit from their services. Most importantly, Woodward stresses that as long as libraries are receptive to change and evolve with their communities, they will ultimately survive.

In the introduction Woodward states that she is writing for other librarians. However, I would highly recommend this read to first-year library science (LIS) students as her book provides an excellent overview and summary of where libraries have been, their current state of affairs, and their future outlook. Woodward offers a good framework for such students beginning their studies; she gives them an accurate context within which to approach topics as they learn about the field and the future roles that information professionals will fulfill. Woodward’s book would give LIS students a solid basis from which to contemplate the various types of communities they may be best suited to serve. Her book could also help students develop strategies for success in the profession.

—Shannon Fox (sfox@austincollege.edu), Austin College, Sherman, Texas


Librarians are inherently disadvantaged in collecting for professional programs as they often approach this responsibility as an outsider. Standard