Telling the Technical Services Story: Communicating Value. Edited by Kimberley A. Edwards and Tricia Mackenzie, Chicago: ALA Editions, 2021. 229 p. $64.99 softcover (ISBN 978-0-8389-4946-7)

Professional discussions about the value of library technical services have long been the subject of the library literature and conference presentations. Often not fully understood until experienced first-hand, technical services work can appear mysterious to our library and organizational colleagues, and conveying the impact of our work is even more of a challenge to explain to library patrons engaged in teaching and learning. Because of this disconnect, many technical services librarians see advocacy as part of their role. The business of technical services evolves constantly in response to changing acquisitions models, data and discovery requirements and capabilities, and technological innovations, and therefore, it is no surprise that at the heart of advocacy lies communication. *Telling the Technical Services Story: Communicating Value* is a compilation of interesting case studies, primarily from academic libraries, that underline the importance of communication in conveying the impact of library technical services. Editors Edwards and MacKenzie note in their introduction that technical services work has moved beyond the back room and remains a critical part of fulfilling the library's mission. Due to the positioning of technical services, a communication strategy is often needed and sharing these practical ways to carry out this strategy is reflected by the publication of this title.

The fourteen case studies contained in this volume provide practical advice and share specific tools used to support communication by technical services librarians within units and departments, across organizations, and out beyond into the broader community. In her book *Academic Library Metamorphosis and Regeneration*, organizational development librarian Marcy Simons points to the marketing strategy of "seven times, seven ways" as a rule of thumb to communicate change.[1] Taking this rule and applying it to conveying value in technical services work, understanding as many creative ideas and innovative approaches as possible becomes necessary to build a communication approach that can be adapted to fit the local need. The volume is logically organized by scope with case studies about internal department communication first, followed by two parts that introduce case studies involving interactions with library stakeholders and outlining those designed to connect with the greater library community.

In thinking about the local, departmental view first, strong communication with clarity is the key. Four institutions provide insights into their efforts to strengthen the foundation of their communication within their units with an eye toward seeing these efforts as a "laboratory for experimenting with communication" (51) as shared by the University of Iowa in the context of their collection relocation project. A variety of outcomes emerge from these efforts, such as having a cohesive, formalized reference resource like that of the Michigan State University's documentation repository; managing workloads using project management as described by San Diego State University; or building trust by holding retreats as suggested by the University of Illinois at Chicago. The examples in part 1 point to the importance of communication transparency, accessibility, efficiency, sharing, and stewardship through what the University of Iowa calls "intentional communication" (58). Each case study also highlights the need for careful conceptual planning, concrete organization of the communication technique to be used, and follow through on implementation of the chosen strategy. Many techniques and output systems are mentioned, including follow-up surveys, content mapping, infographics, and sharing information via web applications.

A common theme of collective expertise follows in part 2, which focuses on communication between different library departments as a means to establish shared expectations. Five case studies reflect how to interact and intersect with the complexities of library technical services work. Often confusion or misunderstanding create barriers that can be addressed through the approaches shared in this set of stories. Colorado University-Boulder outlines its use of a collaborative project management application to create consistent, transparent and efficient workflows requiring participation by multiple departments. A wonderful "E-resources troubleshooting chart" (116–17) is included from Marymount University as they share the story of how they trained public services staff to assist with resolving access issues for electronic resources. Starting small with a community of practice helped librarians at Ohio Northern University make personal connections that were supported by stronger operational and planning communication. The University of South Florida-Tampa developed a formal training program for those outside the metadata operation who utilize the catalog on a regular basis and also established a shared vocabulary to facilitate conversations about further work together. The University of Tennessee-Knoxville used surveys and focus groups to bridge the communication gap between technical services and subject librarians to create trust and build stronger bonds between the units. These stories about cross-program communication consistently point to engagement, enlightened and informed members, and a goal of comprehensive understanding at their foundation and they result in efficiency and better service for patrons.

In the most outward facing scope and set of stories shared in this volume, communication is often combined

with other approaches, such as data driven analysis, marketing principles, or outreach techniques. Part 3 addresses this perspective as illustrated by five case studies that represent the added political and professional weight that comes with selling value to university administrators, faculty, and students. The Colorado School of Mines takes advantage of collection data to reinforce their story, framing data in the context of the library, its peers and the industry at large. Use of data also plays a large part in the Loyola Marymount University's case study about collection deselection. Programmatic decision-making is possible by using data created and maintained by technical services, combined with data from other sources and systems. The concept of developing an "(over) communication plan" (202) points to the nuances of balancing perceptions and hard data in a project setting that includes librarians and other stakeholders. Harkening back to marketing approaches referenced by Simons, such strategies form the focus of the case study shared by librarians from the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI). Service development is the focus of the final two case studies from Georgia Tech and the University of Rochester-River Campus, with the former focusing on the user research process and portfolio management and the latter on building a program of metadata services that can serve the campus research community.

The words of contributing authors Mezick and Gould ring true for this volume, when they write, "When the context of what we do and what others do is widely understood, successful outcomes are produced" (136). While the changing nature of technical services as addressed in this volume is similar in topic and structure to other recently published works, such as *Library Technical Services: Adapting to a Changing Environment,*[2] this volume has the feel of a "how-to" manual specifically for technical services communications. Its chapters are relatively short in length but full of practical advice. Examples of checklists, planning techniques, organizational tools, schedules, and surveys are included for quick adaptation and adoption. Due to the practical nature of the volume, any librarian who needs to communicate the value of individual or group work could benefit from considering these case studies. Bibliographies and notes are also included to point the reader to more examples in support of the process outlined within each chapter. Even though authorship is heavily slanted academic libraries, the techniques and systems mentioned are universal.—*Laura Sill (ljenny@nd.edu), University of Notre Dame*

References

1. Marcy Simons, *Academic Library Metamorphosis and Regeneration* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).
2. Stacey Marien, *Library Technical Services: Adapting to a Changing Environment* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2020).