Book Review

Michael Fernandez, editor

Making the Library Accessible for All: A Practical Guide for Librarians, Second Edition.
By Jane Vincent. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2024. 179p. $65 paperback
(ISBN 978-1-5381-7681-8); $61.50 e-book (ISBN 978-1-5381-7682-5).

Accessibility has gained significant attention and has become a top priority. Libraries strive to meet legal requirements and be more accommodating and appealing to patrons and employees with disabilities. *Making the Library Accessible for All: A Practical Guide for Librarians* by Jane Vincent addresses a variety of accessibility issues, such as communication barriers, material and format accessibility, architecture and environmental considerations, events and exhibits accessibility, as well as technology and web accessibility. Moreover, it outlines relevant legislation and regulations to consider.

Originally published in 2013, this revised edition features the latest information and includes changes to disability-related language, ongoing developments such as the Marrakesh Treaty and universal design, and updated references and resources. An extensive selection of interviews with librarians and accessibility experts from diverse backgrounds and types of libraries, many of whom are disabled, completes the publication, providing a rich tapestry of perspectives and experiences on accessibility. This book is part of the Practical Guide for Librarians series, a collection of dozens of books written by librarians to provide practical guidance on relevant and vital issues.

Assistive technology is a prominent and engaging topic in the book, which is unsurprising given that Vincent has written two books on the subject. In this book, the author discusses solutions that use assistive technologies to address common access issues for people with a particular disability. The book gives information on various assistive technologies, including free and paid products and buying advice. For example, it provides guidance on purchasing a braille embosser printer, paper expenses, and methods to minimize machine noise. There is also information about lesser-known assistive technology, such as refreshable braille output and display enhancements for neurodivergent individuals. Readers can refer to Vincent's other works to gain a deeper understanding of assistive technologies.[1]

The central objective of the "Architectural and Environmental Access" chapter of the book is to simplify the review of the *2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design*. Chapters of the standards are outlined, and sections relevant to common library building features are identified. For instance, it details the chapters in the standards that cover the accessibility requirements for drinking fountains, including spout height and knee and toe clearance requirements. Additionally, features that have become increasingly important but are not yet addressed in the standards—such as quiet spaces, signage, environmental illness, and chemical sensitivity considerations—are described.

Vincent's book focuses on effective communication and best practices for assisting disabled patrons. It emphasizes the importance of using appropriate language, etiquette, and strategies to create an approachable and welcoming environment. To identify and address accessibility barriers proactively, Vincent stresses the significance of regularly collecting feedback from patrons with disabilities. Furthermore, the book offers tips on recruiting and engaging individuals with disabilities for surveys

and focus groups. The appendix, "Questions for Accessibility Resource People," categorizes questions based on accessibility areas, providing a starting point for gathering feedback (159–161).

A key strength of the book is how well it decodes the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which may seem complex and difficult to grasp due to its highly technical nature. Additionally, it contains information about the variances between different WCAG versions and tools for automated and functional accessibility testing. A brief section on Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPATs) documentation could be elaborated and described in greater detail. However, the references and resources offered at the chapter's end provide ample reading.

Although the author mentions updating the current edition with academic library details, the book seems more suited for public libraries. Additionally, some parts of the book may lack sufficient information, although each chapter does contain relevant references and resources. According to the preface, "this book is intended as a starting point: a collection and, where helpful, interpretation of the most useful resources on accessibility in libraries and similar public areas that are currently available" (xvi). Without overwhelming the reader, this book concisely covers a wide range of accessibility issues. An additional resource on accessibility is available in the Practical Guides for Librarians series, *Developing a Library Accessibility Plan*, by Rebecca M. Marrall.[2] This book provides extensive information on VPATs and the auditing process, inventorying physical barriers to accessibility, and developing accessibility and response plans. Depending on the reader's interests, it could be a useful complement to Vincent's book.—*Colleen Lougen (lougenc@newpaltz.edu), SUNY New Paltz*

References

1. Jane Vincent, *Implementing Cost-Effective Assistive Computer Technology: A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2012); Jane Vincent, *A Guide for Digital Assistive Technology Provision to Postsecondary Students* (Huntersville, NC: Association on Higher Education & Disability (AHEAD), 2020).

2. Rebecca M. Marrall, *Developing a Library Accessibility Plan: A Practical Guide for Librarians* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).