

## SOURCES

has several qualities to recommend it. Serchay's definition of graphic novels is far broader than most and includes comic strip collections, anthologies, bound reprints of comic books, and fan fiction comics. The book is so thorough that if a librarian were to drop down from Mars having never seen a comic in her life, Serchay's descriptions and background information would allow her to understand them well. Depending upon one's point of view, this thoroughness is either a virtue or an annoyance. Those who do have some familiarity with the format may want to skim part 1, "Understanding the Value and Types of Graphic Novels." Likewise, librarians who do not plan to collect comic books retrospectively may find the author's exhaustive coverage of single-issue series' changes of title, publisher imprints, crossover characters, and so on to be merely exhausting.

On the other hand, there is always something new to learn. Serchay's section on manga in its many forms greatly increased this reviewer's knowledge of the subject. A list of popular manga storylines was enlightening. Who knew there was a manga title about the 7-Eleven chain coming to Japan? Unfortunately, other parts of the world receive very little attention. Serchay devotes only three pages to comics traditions outside of the United States or Japan. That hardly seems fair to countries such as France and Belgium, where *bande dessinée* has long been a legitimate and well-respected art form.

Half of the book is given to three useful appendixes. Appendix A is an annotated list of recommended graphic novels (and again, this includes volumes of collected Superman comics and the like), with ratings to indicate appropriate age levels. Appendix B is a bibliography of comics-related books for librarians and patrons. Appendix C provides URLs for several publishers, vendors, and news and reviews sites. There is also a general bibliography and two indexes.

*The Librarian's Guide to Graphic Novels for Adults* does not contribute much that is new to the literature, although some may appreciate having the subject covered in one place. Francisca Goldsmith's *Graphic Novels Now: Building, Managing, and Marketing a Dynamic Collection* (ALA, 2005) covers practical issues such as storage, cataloging, and preservation in a more organized and thorough fashion. Steve Miller's *Developing and Promoting Graphic Novel Collections* (Neal-Schuman, 2005) also covers some of the same ground as Serchay. For selection, one could hardly do better than Gene Kannenberg's 2008 guide, *500 Essential Graphic Novels: The Ultimate Guide* (Collins Design). And Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (Harper Paperbacks, 1994) is still the most accessible and thorough work available on how we read and intellectually process comics.

Librarians with little knowledge about collecting comics and who do not already own other titles on the subject will find Serchay's book worthwhile, as will librarians who are interested in a good overview of the history of the comics industry.—Liorah Golomb, *Humanities Librarian, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma*

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*Marketing Today's Academic Library: A Bold New Approach to Communicating with Students*. Brian Mathews. Chicago: ALA, 2009. 171p. \$48 (ISBN 978-0-8389-0984-3).

Most libraries engage in activities intended to promote services, attract users, and garner support. Academic librarians increasingly recognize the importance and benefits of marketing their libraries both on and off campus. *Marketing Today's Academic Library*, by Brian Mathews, is a recent addition to the growing literature in this field. Readers likely will expect to find in this book guidance in developing advertising or outreach strategies for academic libraries, and Mathews certainly attends to such aspects of marketing. Fundamentally, though, the book is about building and maintaining genuine relationships with students. In Mathews's view, that is the basis for effective marketing.

This book differs from most library marketing literature in its strong emphasis on what Mathews calls "the lifestyle of the user." One of the lessons of this book is that academic libraries should not operate on presumptions or generalizations of what students are about or what they need. Instead, they must engage students in the world in which they live and consider their point of view. To do so, Mathews suggests libraries must adopt the approach of those in the professional marketing community. Throughout the book, he demonstrates that marketing and service should be viewed and practiced together by everyone in the library. He introduces ideas and gives examples and then puts them together with suggestions for practice. The discussion of marketing research techniques is straightforward. Collecting and using data to understand user needs and library performance is complex and riddled with potential pitfalls. Mathews acknowledges this with appropriate warnings about problems encountered in research.

Mathews is known widely for his distinct perspectives on library user experience. He authors the popular Ubiquitous Librarian blog and writes a column in *American Libraries*. Many of the ideas he advances elsewhere coalesce in this book. At the core of Mathews's views on marketing is empathy for library users. He advocates what he calls a "user-sensitive" approach. This call for user-centeredness is not unique in the library literature, and in many respects this book overlaps with literature on customer service and satisfaction. A particular value of Mathews's book is its integration of user-centered librarianship with a holistic view of marketing. A surprising drawback of this book is that its language is not gender neutral. Besides exclusive use of male pronouns (which may be the publisher's editorial policy), virtually all examples, actual and hypothetical, refer to males. Given common practice and the book's focus on user sensitivity, this is conspicuous enough to detract from, or even undermine, central themes of the book.

By and large, this book is a significant contribution to the literature of academic library marketing. Readers who enjoy Mathews's writings are certain to welcome the book. Academic libraries, and individuals involved in library marketing, should purchase this book.—Anthony Stamatoplos, *Associate Librarian, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis*