

## SOURCES

information literacy theory and includes contributions from the United Kingdom as well as North America, which has the effect of providing a refreshing perspective on familiar subjects.—Char Booth, *E-Learning Librarian*, University of California, Berkeley

---

***A Picture Book Primer: Understanding and Using Picture Books.*** By Denise I. Matulka. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 307p. paper \$40 (ISBN 1-59158-441-4).

What is a picture book? Is picture book a format or a genre? In *A Picture Book Primer: Understanding and Using Picture Books*, author Denise Matulka answers these questions and many more.

After a brief historical overview, the author begins with the anatomical basics or physical aspects that make a book a picture book. The book continues by delving into the more ephemeral qualities that define a picture book, including a variety of artistic qualities and how they work together to support the whole. Matulka's knowledge of picture books allows her to analyze several well-known picture books to illustrate each of her points. Additionally, line drawing illustrations from the book *Butler and the Fly* (included as an appendix) by Megan Elizabeth Bergman are interspersed throughout the text to bring clarity to the descriptions of artistic terms and the discussion about "reading images" and visual literacy. This book includes many references, enabling readers to further pursue topics of particular interest.

Of special interest is the chapter "Development, Literacy and Picture Books." The author discusses child development and the place of picture books in the development of emergent and visual literacy. In the chapter "Format or Genre?" Matulka discusses the differences between these terms and sheds light on some murky territory. The chapter "Picture Book Issues" gives a succinct summation of issues (including censorship) throughout many decades in the development of picture books. This chapter provides comprehensive information and highlights points for thoughtful discussion. Matulka finishes the book with practical strategies for evaluating picture books and building collections.

Additional helpful features of this book are the extended historical timeline and the glossary included in the appendixes. A supporting resource to use along with the book is the author's website, [www.picturingbooks.com](http://www.picturingbooks.com). By clicking on the "Interactive" button, one can find interactive visuals to complement the chapters in the book. Especially helpful are the pages that cover the picture books mentioned, illustrating art media, style, design elements, and the "topography" of the picture book.

Matulka's straightforward approach and easy tone make this book accessible and appealing to anyone interested in picture books, including librarians, teachers, and aspiring picture book writers. This book would be an excellent supplement for children's literature classes.—Jenny Foster Stenis, *Coordinator, Children's Services, Pioneer Library System, Norman, Oklahoma*

---

***Reference Sources for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries.*** 7th edition. Ed. by Jack O'Gorman. Chicago: ALA, 2008. 329p. paper \$80 (ISBN 0-8389-0943-4).

Many librarians became acquainted with *Reference Sources for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries* during their master's degree studies or early in their careers. Now in its seventh edition, this book retains its original purpose as a buying guide and collection development tool for reference sources. Substantial editing and updating reflect changes in reference publishing and the nature of reference itself. The sixteen chapter contributors represent a wide range of subject areas and different types of libraries.

This edition contains almost seventeen hundred annotated entries, a reduction from more than two thousand entries in the sixth edition. Each entry provides a concise description of the source, and many include evaluative comments. Entries do not appear to follow a set writing style or format. Reminiscent of newspaper and magazine restaurant ratings, entries for reference books include one to four dollar signs to indicate a title's price range.

The book is arranged in twenty topical chapters, each divided further by type of source and subtopic. An author-title index provides straightforward access to entries for known sources; the chapter arrangement and table of contents provide systematic access by subject. When consulting this source, one should bear in mind that there could be additional sources on a subject that were excluded but that might be worthy of consideration for a particular collection. Users may wish to consult this book in conjunction with other sources.

This guide is particularly useful for small collections and libraries, where money and time for collection development are often limited. It also can be valuable in teaching reference sources to LIS students, especially considering the number of graduates who go on to work in small- or medium-sized libraries. Specialists in some subjects may perceive errors and deficiencies in a few entries, but occasional imperfections are excusable in such a large undertaking. Overall, O'Gorman and his colleagues have done an admirable job of producing a practical source that lives up to the reputation of previous editions.

After almost forty years, *Reference Sources for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries* remains a standard tool for collection development. It is recommended especially for small- and medium-sized public and academic libraries, and for collections that support library and information science programs.—Anthony Stamato, *Associate Librarian, University Library, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Indiana*

---

***Transforming Library Service through Information Commons: Case Studies for the Digital Age.*** D. Russel Bailey and Barbara Dunter Tierney. Chicago: ALA, 2008. 155p. paper \$55 (ISBN 978-0-8389-0958-4; 0-8389-0958-2).

The focus of *Transforming Library Service through Information Commons* is to explore, mainly through the examples of

numerous case studies, the technology, staffing, and service that go into making a successful commons space. As Donald Beagle states in the Foreword, with this focus (and despite some shared authorship), the book is differentiated from *The Information Commons Handbook* (2006), which examines the historical background of the concept of the information commons and provides some how-to information. Therefore, *Transforming Library Service through Information Commons* might be used as a supplement to that earlier work to help those individuals planning commons spaces to create more complete plans and better expectations for their institutions, especially in light of the descriptions and advice offered by the institutions included in the case studies.

It is these case studies that are probably the most valuable feature of the book. The introduction, written by the editors, does a fine job of making the case that the concept of the commons addresses a need for change in our libraries, and the subsequent few chapters lay out thorough and brief definitions of different types of commons, background information for the concept of the commons, and instructions for planning, implementing, and assessing commons initiatives. However, while this information may inspire and excite the reader, it is also presented uncritically. The concept might indeed be revolutionary for libraries, but readers may also wonder about downsides or possible unanticipated problems. Therefore, the case studies act as necessary ballast, touching on unforeseen issues and offering caution while still celebrating successes and offering hope, especially as each case study ends with a section titled “Lessons Learned.” And whereas the case studies do not really lay out specific instructions for how to create a commons, they answer many potential questions. The overall understanding that the reader takes away from this book is that a commons project is a massive undertaking, but it certainly can have its benefits.

Twenty institutions from the United States and Canada were included for the case studies, and they are divided into two chapters: one for large institutions serving ten thousand or more users, and one for small institutions serving fewer than ten thousand users. While all of the case studies tend to offer similar experiences (“if you build it, they will come”), they also differ from each other enough that the reader can feel confident of a good understanding of relevant issues in beginning a commons project. The “Lessons Learned” section at the end of each case study is repeated in a section at the end of the book that reiterates major points and adds a few not included previously. This section, together with the appendixes (dealing with marketing and assessment) and the bibliography, provides some very valuable material for those in “commons contemplation” mode.

The authors of *Transforming Library Service through Information Commons* are passionate about their subject. Not only does the book make a compelling case for such a stance, but

it also includes such complete and useful material that it is easy to share in that enthusiasm.—*Sarah McHone-Chase, Information Delivery Services Librarian, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb*

---

***Web Accessibility: Practical Advice for the Library and Information Professional.*** Ed. by Jenny Craven. London: Facet, 2008. 168p. cloth \$110 (ISBN 978-1-85604-625-1).

Numerous official resources are available on the topic of Web accessibility, from those published from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to the various guidelines established and regulated in various countries. Although *Web Accessibility* focuses on legislation in the United Kingdom, Craven does an excellent job of collecting a range of expert opinions across the information field to provide a unique perspective both on the moral duties and on the legal aspects of creating accessible webpages. Most books on Web accessibility discuss the challenges of Web design, look specifically at the HTML and CSS, and occasionally mention multiple browser considerations. But this book was not written for the coder—it was written for the person interested in a general overview of Web accessibility who needs practical advice for sustaining accessible Web services in the library and information science (LIS) field.

In *Web Accessibility*, the topics progress in a logical succession. First addressed are the tools used to widen access to the Web, such as operating system features and third-party assistive technologies. The Design for All concept (also known as Universal Design) is introduced, and readers are encouraged always to consider the full range of needs of the audience. The next author investigates the social, financial, technical, and legal factors that support the importance of accessible Web design, as well as barriers, such as perceived costs, fears about the loss of creative design, and a lack of organizational support. A brief history of accessible Web design, resources on accessibility, and different methods of assessment are addressed next. In later chapters, issues directly related to LIS are discussed, including limited budgets and conflicting demands. Craven reveals a gap in the awareness of issues relating to Web accessibility and emphasizes how LIS curricula should include Web accessibility as a core topic. The final chapter suggests that readers should take a more holistic approach to Web accessibility and consider Web 2.0, a topic that is highly relevant given the lack of resources currently available covering emerging technologies and Web accessibility. Though many legislative references are focused on the United Kingdom, the overall advice and information in *Web Accessibility* is thorough and applicable to anyone concerned with accessible Web design.—*Rachel Vacek, Web Services Coordinator, University of Houston Libraries, Texas*