

library neutrality is not only impossible, but even dangerous, as it implicitly supports the status quo.

While other works, such as *Revolting Librarians Redux: Radical Librarians Speak Out*, edited by K. R. Roberto and Jessamyn West (McFarland & Co, 2003), provide critical looks at the political and social construction of libraries and librarianship, *Questioning Library Neutrality* is unique in its focus on the dangers of professional neutrality at a time when intellectual freedom is endangered by the government and by social, racial, and economic inequalities that dominate our national dialogue. This work challenges all librarians to interrogate their own beliefs and practices and begin to negotiate a critical relationship with some of the concepts they take for granted. It is highly recommended for professional development collections in all libraries and especially for academic libraries supporting Library and Information Science programs.—Sarah VanGundy, *Reference and Instruction Librarian, SUNY Purchase College, Purchase, New York*

Research-Based Readers' Advisory. Ed. by Jessica E. Moyer. Chicago: ALA, 2008. 278 p. \$50 (ISBN 0-8389-0959-1).

Meant for and written by both practitioners and researchers in the field of readers' advisory, the latest title in the ALA Readers' Advisory Series offers essays by practicing librarians, each accompanied by an annotated literature review compiled by Moyer. She offers this work as an opportunity for librarians doing readers' advisory work to share techniques and tools within the framework of research and study.

Mentioning a "better blending of theory and practice," Barry Trott and Joyce Saricks urge us to become "reflective practitioners." Their chapter provides a thorough past, present, and future discussion covering all aspects of readers' advisory service and includes an apt quotation from librarian Samuel Swet Green in 1876: "The more freely a librarian mingles with readers, and the greater the amount of assistance he renders them, the more intense does the conviction of citizens, also, become, that the library is a useful institution, and the more willing do they grow to grant money in larger and larger sums to be used in buying books and employing additional assistants." (*Library Journal*). *Plus ça change!*

Writings and collections by Chelton, Ross, Shearer, Saricks, Smith, and Wyatt dominate the readers' advisory canon that Moyer cites and annotates before each of the ten "Librarian's View" essays written by knowledgeable working librarians. Most of the essays focus on the usual topics: audience (adult reader, children, teens); content and format (nonfiction, genre fiction, audio, and visual); and tools (conducting the readers' advisory interview and using readers' advisory resources). Mary Wilkes Towner, of the Urbana (Illinois) Free Library, has written a very useful chapter titled "Tools for Readers' Advisors." Her list of online tools has since been reprinted by Moyer in the July 2008 issue of *Booklist*. David Wright's "Zen and the Art of the Readers' Advisory Interview" is illuminating and refreshing.

Moyer also includes chapters on book groups, cataloging

and classification, and collection development. (Weeding as readers' advisory tool? Of course!) By adding these chapters, Moyer has placed readers' advisory at the center of public library practice and has made a good case for its position there. Readers' advisory is also outreach; marketing and public relations are at its core. Moyer and Hollands use the last chapter as an opportunity to respond to Juris Dilevko and Candice F. C. Magown's *Readers' Advisory Service in North American Public Libraries, 1870-2005: A History and Critical Analysis* (McFarland, 2007) in a section entitled "False History, False Future." Among other thoughtful and evocative comments here is the suggestion that readers' advisory is at a crossroads, either heading "down a darker path" where we "waver and dwindle" into a fad or a surge, or toward a future as a "cornerstone of the practice of librarianship." Given the current public library fixation on the "bookstore model," "dumping Dewey," and aggressive customer service, educated and committed readers' advisors are essential. They will benefit greatly from this rich collection.—Katharine Phenix, *Adult Services Librarian, Rangeview Public Library, Northglenn, Colorado*.

What Every Librarian Should Know about Electronic Privacy. Jeannette Woodward. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 222p. \$40 (ISBN: 978-1-59158-489-6).

[M]any gay kids find school libraries to be safe havens and still go there to find resources even though information is so widely available elsewhere. (Debra Lau Whelan, "Out and Ignored," *School Library Journal*, January, 2006).

While radical militant librarians kick us around, true terrorists benefit from [Office of Intelligence Policy and Review]'s failure to let us use the tools given to us. . . . This should be an OIPR priority!!! (E-mail written by an unidentified FBI official, quoted by Eric Lichtblau, "At F.B.I., Frustration Over Limits on an Antiterror Law," *New York Times*, December 11, 2005).

In our current climate, we cannot depend on our government, corporations, or even our neighbors to protect or respect our privacy. But as Jeannette Woodward shows, librarians have long been keepers of their patrons' privacy, even to the point of public scorn or job loss. Consequently, as the statements above show, our most vulnerable patrons have learned to trust us with their inquiries, while some powerful agencies see us as a particularly annoying deterrent to their dubious agendas.

Our reputation for being safe havens for intellectual freedom was earned the hard way: through ever-vigilant librarians willing to oppose authority and even lose their jobs in defense of the First Amendment. However, when it comes to technology, librarians have tended to focus on protecting computers over computer users. In *What Every Librarian Should Know about Electronic Privacy*, Woodward reminds us that now is not the time to rest on our laurels, and she provides us with some of the tools and information we need to

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guard our patrons from furtive criminals and spying.

Woodward's book discusses how—through electronic data mining—our government, predatory corporations, identity thieves, and even terrorists can invade our privacy and do us harm, whether it is financial, emotional, or physical. She then outlines the best ways in which librarians can protect their patrons from these threats. From phishing scams and spyware to data mining by government agencies and corporations, Woodward offers practical advice for librarians who are interested in protecting their sometimes naïve patrons from intrusion.

In her first chapter, Woodward temporarily suspends abstract discussions of privacy invasion to humanize this complex issue by presenting “portraits” of typical library computer users. These scenarios starkly demonstrate how easily novice or careless computer users inadvertently grant data miners access to their personal information. Woodward then illustrates various facets of privacy and reveals the numerous ways in which patrons can be spied upon.

Woodward's book is well written and gives clear explanations of complicated topics such as the digital divide, social networking sites, RFID technology, the difference between COPPA and CIPA, and the PATRIOT Act. She offers comprehensive instruction on how better to maintain computers and software in order to protect patrons' privacy, and includes a step-by-step plan that details how to protect electronic privacy within our libraries.

A troubling issue in librarianship is also raised: sometimes “to protect the privacy of our users, we must occasionally invade it” (24). This is a delicate balance that librarians must maneuver, because providing a service that could endanger our patrons obligates us to “become more aware of the kind of personal information they are sharing and the uses to which that information is being put” (52). Woodward suggests that we “look for certain signs” that our patrons are providing unnecessary information on library computers (and explains what those “signs” are), rather than peer over their shoulders. And her step-by-step plan and workshop instructions (chapters 9 and 10) provide information on how to deter electronic spying *before* we find ourselves in the position of having to “peer.”

One quibble: Woodward repeatedly refers to library users as “customers,” which—considering the important topic of her book—is ironic. Libraries are not simply a retail outlet, and library users have come to trust us and expect more from us than, say, Borders Books. Our care for and protection of our users make them more than merely our “customers,” but rather our patrons.

What Every Librarian Should Know about Electronic Privacy is highly recommended for public and academic libraries, and strongly encouraged for library school curriculums.—Tracy Marie Nectoux, *Cataloger, Illinois Newspaper Project, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*