

SOURCES

user or study group does not exist. Students mix and match library spaces to specific project goals, in addition to personality preferences, and thus value a diverse set of options.

An oft-repeated idea sets the tone for this volume: the idea that the opinions of “experts,” such as librarians and architects, are no longer authoritative or relevant because users’ behaviors change continually. This study will benefit any institution looking for creative ways to measure its users’ needs, challenge stereotypes about students, and build a more participatory design process into future renovations of physical space and library services—*Christina M. Kulp, Life Sciences Librarian, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma*

Successful Social Networking in Public Libraries. By Walt Crawford. Chicago: ALA, 2014. 176 p. Paper \$55 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-1167-9).

The prolific Walt Crawford is a writer and speaker on libraries, technology, and media, and the author of seventeen books in these fields. He began his social media project in fall 2011 as a “rolling snapshot” that eventually encompassed thirty-eight states and nearly 6000 libraries, just over half of which were found to have a social media presence. His goal was to examine the prevalence of Facebook and Twitter usage for library communication, as well as the extent to which these media actually reach an audience.

The author carefully defines terms such as LSA (legal service area population), “likes,” presence, and reach, and breaks down his findings by HAPLR size—ten size divisions of public libraries as used in Hennen’s American Public Library Ratings. This book is not for librarians who want a “how-to” or for those who don’t have the patience for number crunching. However, as Crawford presents his findings, the text is loaded with real-life examples of postings arranged by HAPLR size. The examples show successful posts, loaded with humor, invitations, anecdotes, and questions. A chapter on state-by-state findings helps benchmarking among comparable-sized libraries.

Crawford’s survey helps answer questions such as: Should libraries devote staff time to social media activities? Can they sustain these activities and engage their communities effectively? Do their patrons expect to see them in these media channels? The survey viewed social media as actual engagement, something beyond simply another publication channel. Some best practice issues are raised, including how frequently to post, how to deal with spam, and how to pull the plug if it is just not working.

The take-away lesson here is that libraries of all sizes can have vibrant and engaging social network presences. Crawford notes that his research left him with a greater appreciation for the extent to which small libraries are the centers of their communities. In his closing thoughts, he says he is not daunted by the fact that few public libraries’ social media efforts reach even 10 percent of their potential patrons.

Crawford found that 94 percent of all library Facebook pages had significant gains in the number of “likes” during the four-month period that he studied, and he declares that, ultimately, each library must define success for itself.—*Susan Hopwood, Outreach Librarian (retired), Marquette University Libraries and Trustee, Whitefish Bay Public Library, Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin*

Transforming Young Adult Services. Edited by Anthony Bernier. Chicago: ALA, 2013. 254 p. Paper \$65 (ISBN: 978-1-55570-907-5).

This collection of scholarly essays attempts to answer the question, “How should LIS imagine today’s young adults?” (xvi). Bernier posits that those who work in and study libraries have been remiss in letting others define our audience for us. This leads to a distinct disconnect between libraries and teens.

Some of our fundamental ideas about who teens are and what services they need can be traced to the past century with dismayingly little change to date. If obsolete theories and concepts are used, teens are defined solely as students (in educational theory), patients (in psychological theories), “less than” adults, at-risk, “other”—in short, they are marginalized. This volume argues successfully that these definitions must be overhauled.

Of course, many definitions of young adults are possible, and this collection offers several ideas for instituting change. In nine chapters, respected scholars examine many concerns and propose jumping-off points for debate. Section one explores age-based definitions of teens and suggests turning these traditional, adult-centered perspectives into teen-centered approaches to services and programs. Section two examines stereotypes of young adult library users as at-risk youth, reluctant readers, and “those to be molded,” and attempts to loosen our grip on these outdated concepts. The third section considers moving library service to young adults toward a new vision for the future under a newly applied “critical youth studies” model.

For those looking for a “big-picture” theoretical look at library service to teens, this book might work. There are many ideas presented here, applying different theories to various young adult library concepts. Yet some of the ideas conflict with others, and some of the essays are written in academic language that renders them almost inaccessible. If readers are looking for a practical resource guide, or “how-to” instructions, they had best look elsewhere. As Bernier states, “While it is the chief intention of this collection to provoke debate, readers may not find it entirely satisfying or definitive” (21). This reader is not entirely satisfied to be left with so many more questions than answers. The debate must continue until these questions can be answered and libraries can move on from debate to actual transformation.—*Sarah J. Hart, Branch Librarian, Chatham-Kent Public Library, Chatham, Ontario, Canada*