
Sources Professional Materials

Karen Antell, Editor

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Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries, 3rd Ed. Miriam B. Kahn. Chicago: ALA, 2012. 158 p. Paper \$60 (ISBN 978-0-8389-1151-8).

"Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst"—excellent advice for anyone, but especially for librarians. Charged with protecting and preserving valuable resources, institutions such as libraries and archives must be ready for all kinds of situations, from natural disasters to power outages. The third edition of *Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries* helps institutions form a thorough, comprehensive disaster plan, but also takes into account the possibility that they may not yet have one. As author Miriam B. Kahn observes, "Disasters come whether or not we are prepared" (xi).

Kahn has extensively revised the 2003 edition to include up-to-date procedures and forms. As in the previous editions, the manual is divided into five sections: Response, Recovering Collections and Restoring Operations, Prevention, Planning, and Response and Recovery Procedures. The first two sections focus on immediate disaster response and a quick return to normal operations. Sections Three and Four guide institutions in assessing their readiness and planning for various scenarios. Finally, Section Five covers how to deal with various material formats and situations (ozone, mold, insects, etc.). Each section is comprehensive and detailed, but unfortunately, the case studies that concluded each section of the previous edition are no longer included. These immediate "reports from the field" were useful in providing real-world examples of the importance of the concepts detailed in the volume.

The book's densely packed text does not lend itself to quick reference in times of emergency. More useful in the "heat of the moment" is Appendix A, which provides dozens of checklists and forms, ranging from basic emergency contact lists to very detailed materials recovery checklists. The author has also created a series of additional forms in three sequential phases: Phase I, "Activate Plan"; Phase II, "Assessment"; and Phase III, "Rescue and Recovery."

Especially in the aftermath of major events such as Hurricane Katrina, the Oklahoma City bombing, and September 11th, 2001, disaster planning books, articles, and websites have proliferated, numbering in the hundreds. However, with its wealth of essential information, this new edition of *Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries* stands out as one of the best.—Jennifer A. Bartlett, Head of Reference Services, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

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Individuals interested in reviewing professional materials should contact the "Professional Materials" editor, Karen Antell, Head of Reference and Outreach Services, Bizzell Memorial Library, University of Oklahoma, 401 West Brooks St., Room 146, Norman, OK 73019; e-mail: kantell@ou.edu.

Past or Portal: Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives. Ed. by Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba. Chicago: ACRL Publishing, 2012. 336 p. Paper \$60 (ISBN 978-0838986103).

This book presents a collection of individual case studies concerning education and special collections. As with any collection written by different authors, some case studies are more engaging than others, but for those with an interest in integrating special collections into educational environments,

this volume presents a great deal of useful material. It does a particularly good job of exposing the reader to many different ideas and methodologies.

The book is divided into four sections: The Artifact, The Program, The Work, and The Pedagogy. The articles comprising The Artifact section cover projects that focus on the objects contained in various special collections. The authors discuss how they have used archival objects in unique ways to engage students in the history of the objects themselves and in the history of reading and books. Various methods are employed, including hands-on examination of objects, writing about objects, and creating objects. Ideas from these articles can be extended to apply to many situations.

The Pedagogy section consists of case studies about the use of special collections materials within a course curriculum. These projects involve using specific material from special collections to support specific courses (or units of courses) in a university setting. As a natural consequence, these cases are less universal than those in The Artifact section and may not be as easy to incorporate into diverse situations and environments.

The Program section presents multidisciplinary approaches to increasing undergraduate involvement in special collections. These studies discuss programs that engage students in campus-wide initiatives and use diverse resources from various special collections. The projects discussed in this section are the most general and perhaps the easiest to apply in a wide range of university special collections settings. Creative ways to encourage the use of the special collections throughout the university are discussed: for example, offering stipends to professors who incorporate special collections into their curriculum and digitizing items for students to use in the classroom.

The Work section contains case studies involving student workers in special collections. Several innovative programs are discussed, including classes creating exhibits, students creating metadata using blogs, and students creating original collections. Many of these projects could also be extended or altered to assist in the work of university librarians and other staff members.

The book could benefit from synchronizing the order in which the section descriptions appear in the introduction with the order in which they appear in the book. Providing an abstract for each case study would make it easier for readers to select the articles most relevant to their particular needs and situations. Overall, though, this work is a valuable resource. It presents numerous ideas and innovations that will provide inspiration to readers as they develop their own special collection education initiatives.—*Maura Valentino, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon*

Privatizing Libraries. Jane Jerrard, Nancy Bolt, and Karen Strege. Chicago: ALA, 2012. 72 p. Paper \$45 (ISBN 978-0-8389-1154-9).

This short but concise book discusses the core issues

surrounding the privatization of public libraries. From the beginning to the end, the reader is presented with strategic directions and pointers for library employees, the community, and other stakeholders considering privatization of their library. The authors explore the meaning of privatization, from a historical perspective to the most recent definition, making a clear distinction between privatization and outsourcing: “Privatization is the shifting of library service from public to private sector through transference . . . [whereas] “outsourcing involves transfer to a third-party or outside vendor” (1). In addition, the authors explain various policies on privatization of public libraries given by the American Library Association (ALA) and several state library organizations. Such policies often differ. “ALA opposes the shifting of policymaking and management oversight of library services from the public to the private for-profit sector” (2), but two states’ library organizations (New Jersey’s and Massachusetts’s) endorse privatization if the process adheres to certain essential stipulations. California, by contrast, has privatized some of its library systems but still “believes [that] public libraries are a . . . community resource that should be just that: public” (3).

The authors examine the privatization process undertaken by libraries from four different states: Kansas, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and California. The examination focuses on three major aspects: contracts, requests for proposals, and data analysis. Information about the process was provided by each library system and includes perspectives from the library’s directors, board of trustees, city officials, and the contracting agency. In addition, information was gathered from each library system about the privatization process’s timeline, contract negotiation, and effects. Some libraries also provided advice and outcome comments.

The final chapter presents the reader with potential obstacles to privatization as well as potential results. Some concerns to be addressed are staff changes, loss of community, and loss of transparency. In the words of the authors, “As the trend toward privatization of public assets is gaining traction . . . there is no doubt that this trend includes public libraries. . . . The simplest piece of advice for this scenario is, simply, be prepared” (37). This book is a valuable resource for librarians in general and public librarians especially.—*Ola Carter Riley, Biomedical Librarian, Prairie View A & M University, Prairie View, Texas*

Protecting Intellectual Freedom in Your Public Library. June Pinell-Stephens. Chicago: ALA, 2012. 148 p. Paper. \$50 (ISBN 978-0-8389-3583-5).

Intellectual freedom is one of the most contentious issues in the library profession. Book challenges, law enforcement requests for library records, use of library facilities by controversial groups—all tend to provoke heated argument that often degenerates until it borders on name-calling. The author, a former librarian with the Fairbanks (Alaska) library