have the potential to be superior instruction and outreach tools. In practice, however, many online guides do not receive much use, leading some librarians to question whether staff time and skills might be better used elsewhere. In this slim and readable work, Puckett argues that low use is most likely tied to lack of usability, and he advises librarians to simplify their guides if they want them to be helpful to students. Throughout this book, Puckett follows his own advice about simplicity, presenting his readers with succinct, well-organized chapters that define core instructional design and web usability concepts in plain language and explain how these concepts should be incorporated into research guides. Readers are never left to wonder about the relevance of any concept addressed in this book, nor does any part of the book feel esoteric or extraneous. Librarians with instructional and web design backgrounds will already be familiar with much of what is covered in this book. However, Puckett’s ideas serve as a good reinforcement of knowledge and practices used in face-to-face teaching and remind librarians that the techniques they use in the classroom can be applied to help them create better research guides.

Although this book’s strength lies in its simplicity, it leaves out important information about web accessibility and Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues. Platforms such as LibGuides are built to be ADA-compliant, but librarians still must understand the basic rules of creating accessible web content so that they do not unwittingly create barriers for patrons with hearing and vision disabilities. Those interested in learning more about ADA accessibility issues will therefore need to look elsewhere.

Readers considering purchasing this book may wonder why Puckett did not simply write a book about LibGuides, because LibGuides is the most popular and widely used platform for online research guides. But as Puckett explains, not all libraries subscribe to LibGuides, so the book is not platform-specific. Puckett’s approach in explaining how instructional and web design standards can be applied in general, and not just to a specific platform, is another strength of this book. (Articles and conference presentations about how to create more user-friendly guides in the LibGuides platform are abundant, whereas information about how to create useful and usable research guides in general are lacking.) Academic librarians with an instructional role will find Puckett’s approach in explaining how instruction to specific areas within the library. For example, in chapter 13, David Smallen highlights the use of MISO and LibQUAL+ as a tool for improving IT services. In chapter 14, Lisa Hinchliffe addresses assessment of student learning and information literacy outcomes. In the last chapter, James Neal discusses the future of assessment for academic libraries.

This book should be viewed as essential for any academic library involved in an accreditation process, self-study, or external review. Each chapter contains practical suggestions and could be used as a quick resource guide on its own. Highly recommended.—Hector Escobar, Director of Education and Information Delivery, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio


For librarians who wish to start or revamp their library programming for millennials, this book is full of excellent ideas. The book starts out with a discussion of who the millennials are as well as information about what patrons of various ages—from late teens to the 40s—want in a library program. The authors also share the story of how their own library programs geared towards millennials led to this book.