Overall, the volume’s quality is uneven. Some chapters are focused, factual, and substantive, whereas others are more personal. Some essays simply seem unfocused and unfinished, and essential topics such as technology management and finances are missing altogether.

Another shortcoming is the haphazard placement of the chapters, which appear to be in no particular order and jump from one topic to another, with a few exceptions. For example, a chapter on facilities and a chapter on library safety and security are sensibly juxtaposed. Likewise, the final two chapters, on outreach and programming, complement each other. These four chapters are among the stronger with regard to content. Other chapters that seem to have some relationship to each other are scattered throughout the volume, which makes for a choppy read. For example, the initial chapter on navigating institutional context is well written and gets the volume off to a sound start, but this chapter should have been followed by the chapters on strategic planning, collaboration in Connecticut public higher education, and the very personal essay by Patricia Tully. The remaining five chapters focus on topics related to managing and supervising. Had these been presented in a different order—shared governance, communicating expectations, team building, human resources, and supervising faculty librarians—the flow of the volume would have been better. Nearly all of the authors offer notes, references, bibliographies, or recommended readings, yet the usefulness of these resources is relative to the chapter and how the topic is presented in the author.

Overall, the volume falls short of becoming a truly valuable resource for those considering a move into management. It does, however, provide a quick read and serves as a sampler of personal essays, which some readers will find valuable and appealing. But for the professional seeking to identify and learn about specific managerial and leadership skills in order to intentionally plan for their own professional development, this volume lacks substance and guidance.—Pat Hawthorne, Associate Dean for Research and Education, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas


With the help of the Museum of Science and Industry, the Chicago Public Library now offers young patrons the opportunity to participate in an innovative summer program called Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge. The program uses the principles of STEAM education (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) and design thinking to encourage the development of twenty-first-century skills. In Summer Matters: Making All Learning Count, Elizabeth M. McChesney of the Chicago Public Library and Bryan W. Wunar of the Museum of Science and Industry explain why and how they created their Summer Learning Challenge, and how readers can implement similar programs at their libraries.

McChesney and Wunar begin by laying out the evidence-based research they used to rationalize the need for a new summer program. The pair point to several studies that indicate the benefits of experiential, informal education and, in particular, the value of giving youth the agency to choose topics and experiences of interest to them as individuals. The research argues the importance of providing access to high-quality programming outside of school to low-income children who are at increased risk of suffering from summer slide. From this research, McChesney, Wunar, and their colleagues collaborated to devise a series of goals and desired outcomes and to create a summer program around them.

Subsequent chapters serve as a guide for other librarians who are considering developing learning-based summer programs. McChesney and Wunar outline best practices for developing community partnerships, explain how Chicago's Summer Learning Challenge works, discuss the role that reading plays in the program, and elaborate on the benefits of evaluation, assessment, and continuous improvement. The final chapter provides a simplified step-by-step formula that library staff can use to develop their own programs.

Throughout the book, practical insets and sidebars are included, enhancing the book’s utility and making it more of a manual than a simple narrative. For example, the “Think about It” insets ask specific questions and offer librarians the opportunity to think about how the ideas discussed might be applied to their own libraries. They include templates for writing mission statements, surveys, and more. The “Library Corner” sections offer commentary from Chicago Public Library staff members and capture their feelings about participating in and implementing STEAM-based programming.

The notion of shifting from reading-based to learning-based summer programs has generated widespread discussion in recent years. Summer Matters is an inspirational and informative guide that offers practical, hands-on advice for any public library or educational institution serving youth. It clearly demonstrates how and why the addition of inquiry-based participatory learning to traditional summer programs benefits not just patrons but entire communities.—Jessica Hilburn Schwartz, Teen Services Librarian, Louisville Public Library, Louisville, Colorado


Making the most out of limited resources is a familiar situation to many librarians. How do libraries spark significant change within the constraints of tight budgets, limited staff time, and red tape from within the library system and without? Munro offers a solution in tactical urbanism—hands-on, short-term approaches to improve a city, neighborhood, or library with minimal budget and oversight. A
popular concept in cities, it includes whimsical projects like yarn bombing and pop-up parks, as well as practical fixes to overlooked problems, such as building a footbridge over an obstructed walkway. Although long-term strategies are integral to developing cities or libraries, tactics can be used to address immediate needs or can mark the beginning of a large-scale initiative.

The author begins with an introduction to the concept of tactical urbanism, a glossary of urbanism concepts, and a discussion of how the approach is relevant to libraries. Like cities, libraries are often tasked with finding solutions to problems on the fly, without expertise or adequate funding. The book is filled with case studies of tactical urbanism projects, ranging from small, low-budget endeavors to massive city-wide initiatives. Chapter 2 describes several nonlibrary projects, each followed by a discussion of how the concept applies to libraries. Munro grounds the reader with a reality check before diving into library case studies. Potential pitfalls to consider include the possibility of alienating rather than connecting with the community, the risk of skirting legality, the need to handle the inevitable criticism constructively, and, of course, the lack of sufficient funding.

The library case studies range from public library projects (e.g., Dewey-less shelving systems), political activism (EveryLibrary), and metadata (MarcEdit, Koios, and Access Checker) to major city library renovations such as Washington, DC’s interim branches and London’s Idea Stores. Each case study includes a summary of the project, the key principles behind it, and the nature of the intervention. The author concludes each example with an interview with one of the project planners, providing further insight into the process.

Tactical urbanism is an approach that can be used for problem-solving and enhancing services in any type of library, as all librarians function within the constraints of budget and bureaucracy. I would most strongly recommend this book for public librarians. The many examples provide inspiration for innovative programs and community-library partnerships. Library directors will find helpful information in the “library leader’s guide” for fostering passion projects in their organization. Tactical Urbanism for Librarians is a great resource for library staff looking for new ideas for doing more with less.—Jessica Givens, Library Associate in Information Services, Southwest Oklahoma City Public Library, Oklahoma City


Zotero is a reference management program that enables users to import references from online sources with a single click, organize them, use them to create citations and bibliographies, and share them with collaborators. Both free and remarkably easy to use, it has been making the lives of students and researchers a little easier for more than a decade. As one of the program’s strengths is its intuitive interface, a book-length guide may seem unnecessary to some users who enjoy exploring software on their own; however, the new edition of Jason Puckett’s Zotero: A Guide for Librarians, Researchers and Educators is nevertheless to be appreciated for the thoroughness with which it explains the program. For new users, it provides clear, step-by-step instructions to all Zotero’s major functions, illustrated with extensive screenshots. It also provides enough detail about Zotero’s advanced features that even experienced users are likely to learn something new. (I’ve been using it for years and had never noticed the “timeline” tool before reading this book.)

The guide is organized around the major functions of the Zotero program, with chapters on setting up, saving, and organizing references; creating citations and bibliographies; and synchronizing and sharing libraries. It also contains a chapter about add-ins that provide additional features and options for mobile users. As the primary intended audience is academic librarians, it concludes with a section on teaching and supporting Zotero, including sample session outlines for different audiences. There is no index.

The pace with which software changes always plagues writers of guides such as this one, and unfortunately—but predictably, as Puckett anticipates in the introduction—one major change to Zotero has already occurred since this book’s publication. Zotero used to be available in two versions, a stand-alone program and a Firefox plug-in; support for the Firefox version was discontinued in mid-2017 with the release of Zotero 5.0. The book describes both versions, so its references to the Firefox plug-in are no longer current. However, most of the step-by-step instructions and screenshots refer to the stand-alone version of the program, so fortunately the impact on the book’s usefulness is only minor.—Molly Strothmann, Social and Behavioral Sciences Librarian and Collections Manager, University of Oklahoma, Norman