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Developing Digital Scholarship: Emerging Practices in Academic Libraries

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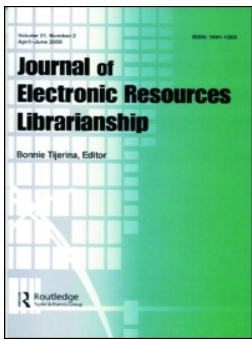
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Developing Digital Scholarship: Emerging Practices in Academic Libraries, Edited by Alison Mackenzie and Lindsey Martin (Eds.), London, England: Facet Publishing, 2016, 208 pp., \$49.95, ISBN: 978-1-78330-110-2.

This is an important and timely book because it offers librarians a practical guide to meet the challenges of the new digital scholarly environment. Written in four parts, the book contains 10 chapters that discuss the core issues and major challenges facing library and information science professionals, as we seek to forge lasting partnerships, acquire new skills, and develop services to remain engaged participants in the creation of new knowledge. In a wide-ranging collection of essays, the book addresses the relationships among digital scholarship, academic libraries, and professional practices.

The book begins with a brief but insightful examination of the term digital scholarship, which really lays the foundation for the rest of the book. In the opening chapter, entitled “The University Library and Digital Scholarship: A Review of the Literature,” the author provides a solid overview of the research literature concerning libraries and digital scholarship. It also poses several important questions such as, What is scholarship? What is digital scholarship and its associated scholarly practices? How have libraries and librarians repositioned themselves to better engage with and support digital scholarship? The author follows this with astute concluding thoughts concerning the “significant gap in how libraries are documenting how they support digital innovation as well as librarians’ skills development.”

In the second chapter, “Digital Scholarship: Scanning Library Services and Spaces,” the focus shifts to librarian engagement by sharing the results from a survey designed to provide insights into the level of librarian’s use of digital scholarship services and systems. The article also addresses the challenges of embedding and sustaining innovative teaching and learning practices across the entire university.

In Part 2, aptly titled “The Agile Librarian,” the focus of the book shifts to library partnerships, the changing roles of librarians, and professional development in the emerging digital landscape. The third chapter, entitled “Librarian as Partner: In and Out of the Library,” is followed by articles in chapters four and five that address the importance of recognizing changes in the digital landscape and how new methodologies can allow libraries to focus on providing valuable and effective services to library users.

The third part of the book, entitled “Digital Spaces and Services,” the focus shifts to creation of digital scholarship centers in the USA, beginning in the sixth chapter. In the seventh chapter, the authors examine the development of new roles and services that will help libraries become successful partners in the new digital landscape.

Finally, in the fourth part of the book, entitled “Communications and Social Networking,” the author provides an educative review of social media use among librarians. “Social Networking With the Scholarly Community: A Literature Review” in chapter eight as well as an interesting piece on the potential disruptive impact of new technologies on the research environment in chapter nine rounds out this section.

The book ends on a rather upbeat note with a reflective article concerning librarian engagement and support of digital scholarship. It does a great job in addressing the myriad issues and challenges facing academic libraries, such as the impact of digital scholarship on services, organizational culture, library space, and usage. The use of Ernest Boyer’s more inclusive definition of scholarship broadens the intellectual parameters that librarians can use to create new and innovative services. It also helps us develop theoretical concepts and professional practices that can assist librarians in closing the skills gap needed to assume our new as well as emerging roles within the evolving library and in the new scholarly paradigm. Reading this book will broaden your perspective and inform your decision making around what role librarians can play in developing digital scholarship.

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