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# Collection Development In The Digital Age [Book Review]

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The digital nature of e-books makes them more fragile than print books and, although libraries purchase the content, the books reside “in files encumbered with DRM software on proprietary appliances and on vendor held and maintained computers” (71). Kirschhoff provides need-to-know information about certified preservation agencies; this is a side of e-book acquisitions that is not often considered in the licensing process.

The original *No Shelf Required* (NSR1) did not address e-book weeding, so it is appropriate that this topic is covered by Alice Crosetto in chapter 6 of NSR2. Crosetto’s response for *why* to weed e-books is simply *why not*, which does not adequately address the need to weed. The author might have addressed weeding in more depth, considering the removal of e-book records from the catalog versus removing them from the supplier’s platform.

The chapter on *RDA*, aptly subtitled “And Why Should Ebook Managers Care?,” makes an eloquent and easily understood argument that access to e-books via the catalog will be affected by *RDA*. The chapter forcefully contends that the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2nd ed. (AACR2) is “dead code,” which challenges some assertions that *RDA* is simply a modification of AACR2 (104).<sup>3</sup> Either way, this chapter provides a truly excellent overview of *RDA* for noncatalogers. The author makes the connection between *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records* (FRBR) and e-books as expressions of a work.<sup>4</sup> Although this chapter has little to do directly with e-books, having information about *RDA* included in this one comprehensive chapter is helpful.

The latter part of the book looks at practical models of e-book and e-reader implementation in public and academic libraries and school media centers. For public libraries, much of the focus is on the aggregator

Overdrive, and this part of the book addresses challenges of circulating e-readers as well as the hidden costs of and issues involved with staff training. Chapter 9, which offers substantial content regarding staff training, should be required reading for all public library directors regardless of their library’s state of e-book implementation.

The last five chapters report on e-reader lending programs in an academic library and three school media centers. These chapters discuss the how-to’s of launching such programs, from presenting to a board of education to physically managing the devices.

Comparing NSR2 with its predecessor is tempting. Both share the same editor and same format. While NSR1 suffered somewhat from inconsistent coverage of topics across multiple chapters and little cohesion between chapters, NSR2 chapters can be read alone without consulting other chapters for additional information. NSR2 is cohesive in that common themes run throughout the book: the shift in focus on service over physical material management and the concomitant opportunity for libraries to become places of content creation and collaboration, the digital divide, and libraries’ dependence on publisher-imposed limits to access and vendor platforms. One expects some unevenness in chapters with multiple authors, but this is not the case; the tone is consistent and concepts like digital rights management (DRM); *RDA*; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); digital object identifier (DOI); and EPUB (an open e-book standard) are explained clearly and succinctly throughout.

A clear strength of NSR2 is its currency with content as recent as July 2011 (a spotlight section on the recent Harper-Collins e-book controversy is included), but the book also is temporal; many of its chapters will be dated in a few years. For now, however,

NSR2 is a practical and indispensable guide to e-book management for every library.—Cathy Goodwin (cgoodwin@coastal.edu), Coastal Carolina University, Conway, South Carolina.

## Reference

1. Sue Polanka, *No Shelf Required: E-books in Libraries* (Chicago: ALA, 2010).
2. *RDA: Resource Description and Access* (Chicago: ALA; Ottawa: Canadian Library Association; London: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2010).
3. *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2nd ed., 2002 rev., 2005 update (Chicago: ALA; Ottawa: Canadian Library Association; London: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2005).
4. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Study Group on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records: Final Report* (The Hague: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009), accessed Sept. 26, 2012, [http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s13/frbr/frbr\\_2008.pdf](http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s13/frbr/frbr_2008.pdf).

**Collection Development in the Digital Age.** Edited by Maggie Fieldhouse and Audrey Marshall. London: Facet; distributed in the United States by Neal-Schuman, 2012. 233 p. \$99.95 paperback (ISBN: 978-1-85604-746-3).

*Collection Development in the Digital Age* sets out to describe from a UK perspective the profound changes in the practice and theory of collection development as digital has progressively replaced print. This review will give my comments as a US collection development professor and selector. The two editors, Maggie Fieldhouse and Audrey Marshall, obviously planned the volume and assigned the topics of the fifteen chapters to form a coherent whole. The contributions are

grouped into four parts: "The Concept and Practice of Collection Development," "Trends in the Developments of E-Resources," "Trends in Library Supply," and "Making and Keeping Your Collection Effective." To quote the editors, "The book consists of a mix of chapters and case studies" (xvi). Chapters, which "examine the issues in general and discursive ways" (xvi), predominate with only three case studies included. As in the United States, the digital revolution appears to have affected academic libraries more than public libraries because ten chapters focus on this library type. Only two chapters recount changes in public libraries, with the remaining three chapters focusing on general topics of interest to both library types. The contributors are "a mix of academics, practitioners, and 'insider' experts" (xvi).

The content is mostly what could be expected. The opening chapter, "The Concept of Collection Development in the Digital World" by Sheila Corral, with its somewhat theoretical treatment, was my favorite for its analysis of the larger issues. "Stewardship and Curation in a Digital World" by Bradley Daigle, one of three US contributors to the book, took second place for presenting a fresh perspective on the longevity of digital resources. Other chapters deal with e-resources in general, online journals, e-books, open access, and institutional repositories. Three chapters treat traditional topics from the print era: managing suppliers, outsourcing collection development, and collection development policies. The one surprise was seeing information literacy and user outreach as collection development topics because "however comprehensive a library collection is, unless it works for your users it is an increasingly unaffordable luxury" (xix). As in all edited works, some chapters are better than others, but the general quality is high.

American librarians will not have much, if any, difficulty in profiting

from this book. British library terms are at times slightly different from American, but easily translate. Two library-related factors in the United Kingdom, however, have led to major differences compared with US collection development practices. First, a more centralized government has encouraged broader initiatives and more cooperation in dealing with changes brought about by the increasing importance of digital resources. For example, "the UK is fortunate in having [a] co-ordinated project for the withdrawal of print journals" (62). Second, fixed prices for library materials were enforced until the UK's Net Book Agreement was declared illegal in 1997. At the start of the digital age, British librarians were much less practiced in negotiating lower prices than their US counterparts.

Two cultural differences are also worth noting. The minor one is that this book made much greater use of US sources than would a similar US publication regarding UK sources. Much more important, to my mind, is the more realistic appraisal of the profound changes that digital publications might make to the current publication system. For instance, the journal might disappear as a container because users now focus on the individual article, or faculty and students might threaten the existence of the library as they come to rely on digital resources from sources other than the academic library. While pessimistic themes sometimes appear in US library discussions, they tend to come from nonlibrary groups or from librarians whose goal is to shock. In the mainstream US literature, the underlying assumption is somehow libraries will survive. Several contributors to this book consider an apocalyptic future for libraries, accepting that the future may not be under their control as users decide that nonlibrary digital resources are good enough to meet their needs.

The book is ambiguous about its intended audience. As a professor who

teaches collection development, I am familiar with the US publications that give a comprehensive overview for the collection development novice. In the editors' introduction, they state that "the book is aimed at library and information science students and new practitioners, but it is also relevant for those practitioners who have been around the block a few times" (xx). I believe that most chapters in the volume are not for the beginner and certainly not for the student with little familiarity with library practice. If the goal of the editors and publisher is to have this volume used as a textbook, it may be suitable for UK students, but I would be hesitant about adopting it for my classes for reasons that have nothing to do with its UK slant. First, I have already indicated the higher-level content that makes this text an excellent resource for US collection development experts, but perhaps unsuitable for beginners. Second, the choice to publish chapters from diverse authors leads to a lack of comprehensive treatment of collection development that students need. I believe, for example, that intellectual freedom and challenges deserve more than one paragraph. The two chapters on public libraries miss important aspects, such as the need to reach out to all members of the user community, since public libraries, unlike academic libraries, do not have a defined clientele.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to review *Collection Development in the Digital Age*. I did not find the transition to digital in the United Kingdom to be very different from what is happening in the United States; similar challenges have led to similar solutions, albeit with a few differences as noted above. US readers might especially profit from the volume's recognition that the digital revolution has not yet run its course and may yet create additional casualties.—Robert P. Holley (aa3805@wayne.edu), Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

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