



Book review

Alison Mackenzie and Lindsey Martin (Editors). *Mastering Digital Librarianship: Strategy, networking and discovery in academic libraries.* London: Facet Publishing, 2014. 183p., ISBN: 978-1-85604-943-6

The book is divided into three sections, each of three chapters, by different authors and with an introduction and overview by the editors. The first is “Rethinking Marketing and Communication”, followed by “Rethinking Support for Academic Practice”, and finally “Rethinking Resource Delivery”. The introduction explains this with clarity and offers some interesting general thoughts as background.

Inevitably with nine authors the chapters are of variable quality, but the overall feeling is of strong quality, good editing and a focus on the strategic, even if many particular examples are cited.

In rethinking marketing and communication the authors look at strategic approaches and practices which harness social media and illustrate the importance of communication and marketing activities in these new online spaces. Above all it is asserted that librarians need to find much greater clarity in defining user needs. Hicks argues lucidly and strongly for the more intelligent use of social media, less to promote the library and its collections and more to build relationships with users. She also provides some good practical examples of how tools can be used. McLoughlin and Benn begin with a brief history of reference services and a literature review. They go on to give a snapshot case study of the University of Western Australia before describing a survey into virtual reference services and their experiences in Australia in developing personalised services based on user need. Such models need to take account of users’ increased range of alternatives. Finally, Bury and Jamieson offer a case study in how their library at Edge Hill has been reshaped to be customer focused based on the creation of shared understanding amongst service managers of the need for a customer-centred marketing culture and how such marketing campaigns can reinforce the trusted status of the service. All staff are seen as having a role in advocacy and relationship management.

The second section covers rethinking support for academic practice and examines the professional expertise required of librarians who engage with and support new academic and learner practices in digitally rich teaching, learning and research environments. Howard focuses on Open Educational Resources but looks more generally at new and evolving roles in support for and use of open and digital content. This covers everything from advice on IPR and copyright to staff training. Davidson then looks at the research environment and how the role of librarian can be extended helpfully into the area of research data management, particularly in support of early career researchers. This is also fitted into the delivery of wider institutional strategies as part of a corporate team. Mitchell and Underhill then look at the student experience, at promoting digital literacy and working with students to help them establish their digital identities through the Digital Tattoo project based at the University of British Columbia. It focuses on helping students to make informed choices.

The final section on rethinking resource delivery investigates the use of strategies to maximise access to online resources and services and offers examples of innovative practices and services. Munro describes experiences at the University of Glasgow in developing a mobile library service as a matter of strategic policy. Charnock and Palmer explore the use of circulation data as a tool to inform recommendations on future reading. The final chapter by Bent explores library support for an overseas campus and stresses the importance of engagement in the university's planning process.

The editors are respectively Dean an Assistant Head of Learning Services at Edge Hill University. Both are active in SCONUL. The work is then a lively and engaging set of papers on current thinking and practice on developing library policy and strategy. The cleverly chosen mix of authors from ancient and modern universities, from data and learning services, from three continents and with a wide range of skills and experience demonstrate that the issues discussed and debated are of universal and not particular interest. Messages on visibility, relevance and influence abound and many of the chapters have useful case studies. Perhaps most important is the reminder that libraries are support services and their focus must be on enabling users to meet their goals not imposing the library's goals on users.

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