A guide to Docutek, Inc.'s ERes software: A way to manage electronic reserves.

Ed. by James M McCloskey.
ISBN 0789027836 (pbk. : alk.paper)
Price: US$19.95

Electronic reserves is a critical academic library service which is still in its infancy stages in South African academic libraries but which is used by most, if not all, academic libraries internationally. If South African academic libraries want to compete globally, it is essential that they move away from the manual system and embrace the newer technologies available which will enable them to provide a better and more efficient reserve system. This book contains nine papers written by professionals who have firsthand experience of the Docutek ERes software package. This book is a practical hands-on guide to the use and performance of the Docutek ERes software package. Although all the authors are from universities in the USA, the book is a useful guide on how to convert from a manual system, what support is needed, and how best to implement the new system and interface it with other software used by the library service.

Interestingly enough, the founder of the Docutek Information Systems Company in 1994 was a physics professor, Dr Philip R Kesten. The idea stemmed from requests by his physics students needing to connect with other class members outside of class. Based on discussions with his students, he created a software package, Phys_Chat. This program became so popular with students and faculty alike that Dr. Kesten was asked if there were other uses for the software. The manual reserve system limited students to place and time, and Dr Kesten, with the help of Slaven Zivkovic, a computer science graduate, developed an electronic reserve repository. It is very lucky for the library world that instead of selling this product directly to university faculty Dr Kesten chose to share the product with the library world. The Santa Clara University library was the first to use the ERes system. To date, this package is used by more than 400 library systems around the world.

Win Shih in his paper entitled ERes: How an instructional technology department is only as effective as its resources examines the technical issues affecting the operation of the system. This paper provides useful guidelines to the Systems librarian who will be instrumental in implementing the software package. It answers questions such as: How powerful does my ERes server need to be?, How much hard drive space do I need?, and Can I share my ERes server with other applications? It also provides the reader with guidelines in selecting scanners and scanning software, and integrating ERes with your library’s online public access catalogue and other electronic library resources. Important to note is the fact that implementing a new system is not merely a technical matter, but also involves changes in workflow, organizational structure, staff skills and the way patrons access resources.

The next two papers: Migrating to a new reserve system: Implementing Docutek’s ERes system by Madeleine Bombeld and Daniel M. Pfohl, and Penfield Library Electronic Reserves Initiative: A primer for Electronic Reserves Service by Andrew Urbanek investigates the changes in workflow, establishing procedures for placing materials on reserve, and provides the reader with useful documents such as the contract between the library and faculty of Penfield Library, and the Copyright Form.

The paper Embracing fair use: One University’s epic journey into copyright policy by Sandra L. Hudock and Gayle L. Abrahamson, briefly discusses how Colorado State University-Pueblo revised their reserves policy to accommodate electronic reserves. Because this was such a time-consuming exercise for this University, other institutions should take heed!

The next two papers consider the complementary relationship between ERes, library databases and courseware. Electronic reserves, library databases and courseware: A complementary relationship by Steven J. Bell and Michael J Krasulski, and A consideration of Docutek’s electronic reserve system in a University’s courseware environment by Donna H Ziegenfuss and James M McCloskey emphasizes the mutually beneficial relationship between faculty and librarians in connecting students with high-quality information.

To provide a balance, the final paper Docutek’s ERes electronic reserves software: An evaluation covers the shortcomings in the system. The paper outlines the shortcomings and suggests improvements. It must be noted though that the author considers the ERes system as one which works exceedingly well. In 2004 Docutek announced an upgrade to ERes and with Version 5, includes more than 50 of the most requested features by Docutek users.

For academic librarians considering moving from their manual reserves system to an electronic reserves system, this book is easy to read and informative.

SA Jnl Libs & Info Sci 2007, 73(2)
Education for library cataloging: International perspectives.

Ed. by Dajin D Sun and Ruth C Carter.
ISBN 978 07890 3113 6 (pbk.)
Price: US$49.95

This is the book version of Cataloging and Classification Quarterly 41(2), 2005 and 41(3/4), 2006.

This book focuses on global perspectives of education for cataloguing against the backdrop of the growing need and demand for international cataloguing standards and cooperation. The education and training of cataloguers in 6 countries (in alphabetical order) is represented in 22 papers written by lecturers and practitioners who reflect on the current developments, trends and critical issues in cataloguing. The American cataloguing issues were excluded as it was previously covered by Janet Swan Hill in Education for cataloging and classification and the organization of information (The Haworth Press, 2002).

Three papers on the cataloguing education and training in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa (distance education through UNISA) represent Africa. Five papers from China, India, Japan and South Korea cover the Asian continent. Two papers focus on the Australian training; while Europe is represented by five papers from Austria, Germany, Spain, the Alps and the British Isles. Three papers deal with the professional training of cataloguers in Latin America, and the remaining four articles on their education in the Middle East.

The IFLA standards for Library Schools of 1976 regard cataloguing and classification as core subjects in a Library and Information Science curriculum. All of the papers’ findings confirm that cataloguing and classification are still regarded as necessary requirements (despite the de-emphasis of mandatory subjects in library education). This is because cataloguing is still relevant to professional practice and has a high value in the development of the individual. The notion that cataloguing is no longer relevant in the Library Science curriculum and, as a result, should be dropped has thus been refuted.

The majority of the papers looks at the position of cataloguing courses in the curriculum (core versus elective subject), the contents of the cataloguing courses in the various qualifications at the specific training institutions in the six continents (undergraduate as well as postgraduate), the changes that Library and Information Science curricula had undergone, as well as the adjustments to incorporate computer applications in cataloguing.

The digital divide (with reference to computer application in cataloguing) is very apparent, as some papers state that their practices are still manually oriented, while others are about to develop online, fully interactive courses and are moving to online, virtual cataloguing classrooms. The general training in cataloguing and classification is thus based on traditional classroom instruction followed by hands-on practice.

Topics raised that the various training units are currently facing and still have to grapple with include: the organization of electronic resources; metadata for which the framework and standards still have to be developed and decided on; and, in-service training and continuing education for cataloguers.

The authors in this book have succeeded in presenting their various case studies and curriculum overviews in a writing style that is easy to comprehend with logical subheadings, plentiful tables and charts to illustrate trends.

This book is an excellent source for lecturers in cataloguing courses as they will be able to determine continental similarities and differences. Furthermore, they will be able to glean the curriculum issues faced by fellow cataloguers, as well as political, historical, cultural and linguistic issues that may have an impact. Comparison of one’s own cataloguing teaching practices with those case studies presented in the book will be possible for local cataloguing educators. This publication will also benefit the postgraduate student in Library and Information Science, and interest practitioners in cataloguing and classification.

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SA Jnl Libs & Info Sci 2007, 73(2)