

Licensing in libraries: Practical and ethical aspects

Karen Rubb-Serrano (Ed.). New York: Haworth Information Press, 2005. 210p.

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Although written for American university libraries, this compilation of articles does deliver on being a practical introduction for an academic librarian to licensing for consortia. The book would be a valuable asset in a library school collection as it compiles the point of view from different aspects: the users, the academic library consortia and commercial content producers.

I have decided to quote from the Editor's Preface, which was a wonderful summary of the entire contents of the book and goes far in describing the content of each paper succinctly.

Quoting directly from the Editor's Preface:

'While libraries have been immersed in licensing for a number of years, permutations on the subject continue. The need to share information about licensing experiences, learn from the parties involved, and understand the impact of licensing throughout libraries remains. Thus these articles address a variety of issues and viewpoints in the licensing process as it currently stands.

Stephen Bosch shares a step-by-step analysis of the use of model licenses. Kristin Gerhard explores producer pricing models, discussing their positive and negative aspects. Anna Wyatt summarizes current legal aspects of licensing for libraries. David Fowler offers a history of licensing to ground the discussion.

Stepping back from the library community, several authors provide a different perspective on licensing. Tracey Armstrong explains the expanding role of the Copyright Clearance Center in providing materials for the electronic environment. Andrea Ramsden-Cooke and Priscilla McIntosh describe "how the other half lives," giving a glimpse of the factors that must be balanced by a vendor in the provision of licensed products. Anne McKee serves up a view of the complexity of consortial licensing, offering practical tips for fair and equitable license negotiation.

Several contributors shed light on the impact of licensing for various library services. Janet Croft discusses the influence of licensing on interlibrary loan processes, arguing for a proactive approach. Jill Emery reminds of us the obligation to educate our users about the licensing terms of products we provide for their use. Richard Fyffe and Beth Forrest Warner urge us to consider carefully how we undertake the provision of unique materials to the public. Yem Fong and Heather Wicht review the numerous products available to libraries for managing licenses and compliance, speaking to the needs of libraries in that regard. Emilie Algenio and Alexia Thompson-Young address permutations on e-book licensing.'

Reviewed by: Kim von Weidts, Librarian, De Beers Marine (Pty) Ltd, 101 Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town

Tel: +27 (21) 658 3202

Email: kim.vonweidts@debeersgroup.com