BOOK REVIEWS

Handbook of electronic and digital acquisitions

Ed. Thomas W Leonhardt.
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This indexed monograph comprises seven chapters, most with bibliographies. The twelve contributors and the editor, who all work in academic libraries in the United States of America, are all introduced by short biographies.

Doris van Kampen addresses *Acquisitions and copyright*. She goes into a fair amount of detail regarding the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and the Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization Act (TEACH Act), two pieces of relatively recent copyright legislation in the United States. She discusses various standard clauses (for example, remote access, e-reserves) that one encounters in electronic resource license agreements, relating them to issues of copyright. In Linda Neyer's chapter entitled *Copyright and fair use: Electronic reserves*, there is repetition of the copyright legislation discussion, but she develops the idea of fair use, focussing on the issues surrounding the provision of e-reserves, or electronic short loan.

For everyone involved in the evaluation of databases, the chapter on *Evaluating databases for acquisitions and collection development*, provides some very useful guidelines for conducting an objective evaluation process. The theme of evaluation is continued in *Collection development strategies for online aggregated databases*, where aggregated databases are the focus of discussion. The term "aggregator database" can be used in a few contexts, but in the context of this chapter it refers to what is also called an "unstable aggregator". These are "abstracting and indexing services that contain or are linked to full-text material". During the evaluation of these databases, the following areas should be addressed: "breadth and depth of coverage; quality of indexing; usability, which includes screen design and ease of searching; ability to customize the database; delivery options; accessibility; availability of statistical usage data; quality of support."

Rickey Best discusses *Issues on the selection of electronic resources* with an exposition of the Research Library Group (RLG) conspectus and the Western Library Network (WLN) conspectus as used in collection development.

Robert Slater and Denise Johnson have written a very useful chapter on *Choosing virtual reference software*. They cover several features that one might require in a VR tool: chatting; browsing; ability to monitor usage; question management; FAQs; email. Electronic data interchange, or EDI, is the topic of the final chapter of the book. EDI facilitates the automatic transfer of vendor invoice information into the library's accounting system, thereby making acquisitions processes more efficient. The authors offer a cautionary note, however, stating that EDI has "produced an inflexible interdependence between libraries and vendor technical services". After going through the effort of establishing working connections between library and vendor, the prospect of any changes to the systems is, as the authors express it, "unattractive".

While the numerous misprints that I encountered detracted from my overall impression of the book, the chapters generally contain information and guidance that would be very useful to those in the business of acquiring electronic material for libraries.

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