

## **Management of library and archival security: from the outside looking in**

O'Neill, Robert K. ed.

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A concise, insightful and informative book that should be in the possession of all custodians of our valuable literature and archives. It brings to their direct attention the all too real possibility to loss of items through theft; what they should do in the event that such losses occur; and what preventive measures can be taken. Through William E. Chadwick's article 'Special collections library security: an internal audit perspective' the book places firmly and unequivocally internal control in the hands of management and it advises them on aspects regarding their staff's responsibility, care and maintenance of resources, provision of adequate security, and on policies and procedures.

The book is aptly entitled in that it stresses the importance for the management of a library or archive to take heed of the escalation of theft and to become proactive in taking measures to reduce or prevent such perpetration. In the light of libraries and archives faced with reduced funding and cuts in subsidies from local authorities and parent institutions in South Africa as well as abroad, this book alerts authorities to formulate necessary policy and take appropriate steps to prevent or reduce theft.

Clear guidelines are given by Susan M. Allen on how to go about dealing with the occurrence of theft by stating in logical sequence all the necessary and sometimes overlooked actions that need to be taken. Edward F. Clark's contribution concentrates on what happens on the part of law enforcement after management has taken all the steps Allen advises. Gregorn Trinkhaus-Randall recommends policies and procedures that enable preventive measures, from as simple as having a well-lit building to as complex as developing a disaster preparedness plan, to be successful.

Librarians are in conflict over two things: one, their role as custodians of information, and two, to make it as accessible as possible. This book advises them on how to successfully combine the two, without compromising or sacrificing security. A holistic approach to security is discussed by Beth L. Patkus.

The most anecdotal style of the book helps to keep reader attention alive all the way from start to end. Although hard facts of security and serious management of the problems encountered therewith are presented, the discussion is uncluttered. A balanced view is achieved through the contributions of a broadband of distinguished professionals from outside and inside the library and archive world.

The purpose of this book, as the reviewer sees it, is to focus the librarians' and archivists' attention on the disaster of resource loss and their need to 'look hard and carefully at security in a thoughtful and comprehensive way'. Published evidence on library book theft in South Africa and related security matters is scanty. A publication of this nature adds to the limited literature on the subject. The reviewer believes that the purpose of this work has been successfully accomplished through a thorough selection of articles.

The contribution in this text have also been published in the *Journal of library administration*, vol 25(1), 1998. This book can be used in conjunction with Lincoln's 'Crime in the library: a study of patterns, impact, and security' and 'Library crime and security: an international perspective', as a useful handbook for effective management of library and archival security.

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