

lapsing into another jeremiad about the decline of books, standards, and Western civilization in general. Epstein has faith in two sources of salvation. The first is technology. Rather than seeing the new digital technology as corporate America's final assault on the book business and its customers, Epstein conjures up a scenario in which Web publishing allows authors and readers to communicate directly with each other. Disintermediation is, I believe, what the process is about, and Stephen King's recent effort at that is heralded as an omen of a happier future. Where publishers had once been useful and efficient middlemen, they have long since degenerated into obstacles standing between literature and readers. The Web is in the process of ending that and thus of totally refiguring the nature of publishing.

The other source of salvation is human nature itself. How will Everyman learn to navigate and make sense of the chaos that is the Web? Not to fear, Epstein reassures us: "Human beings have a genius for finding their way, for creating goods, making orderly markets, distinguishing quality, and assigning value. This faculty can be taken for granted." Indeed, if anything, new technologies will build on and enhance "this faculty." It is been a while since I have encountered such an unashamed profession of faith in rational man. There is something quintessentially American about Jason Epstein, or at least that is how he presents himself. He believes in the benevolent transforming power of technology, the reasonableness and inventiveness of man, and the march of progress. In a world of cynics, egoists, and postmodern dyspeptics, Epstein urges on us some good old unreconstructed Enlightenment optimism.

*Book Business* is not particularly acute or informative, but as a cultural statement, it is well worth a read. I should add, too, that Norton did a fine job producing the book. The type—Mrs Eaves Roman—was new to me, but most appealing: spacious, roundish, and elegant.—*Michael Ryan, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.*

**Lee, Stuart D.** *Digital Imaging: A Practical Handbook.* New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, in association with Library Association Publishing, London, 2001. 194 p. \$55, alk. paper (ISBN 1-55570-405-0). LC 00-45075.

As libraries increase their interest in digitization projects, they often encounter a bewildering array of options. This book attempts to sort through the options and to provide the beginner a realistic picture of what to expect when managing or working within a digitization project. Although the author has outlined the basic requirements of digitization, from selection through delivery of the digital product, he has not produced a detailed guide to the process. However, this is not his intention. As director of the Center for Humanities Computing at Oxford University, Stuart Lee has been both a practitioner and a theorist in the field of digitization. The practical guide he provides is a handbook on how to think through the digitization process. It is a starting place for project managers, librarians, museum professionals, students, and anyone interested in thinking through the steps of a digitization project or seeking to determine what issues need foregrounding when beginning digital imaging.

Lee spares the reader the dense technology-Babel of many digitization guides; rather, his book is a set of clear and practical chapters covering the basics of process and spanning the essentials in planning. The beginning practitioner may be misled by the spare nature of this handbook and its European focus. There are no full-color images, step-by-step diagrams, or comparative charts to visually stimulate the reader to run to the scanner. The syntax is at times awkward in its brevity but is generally clear and to the point. The flourishes are few. This is a solid and well-thought-through handbook that joins the real-life project with conceptual modeling. This book promises to be well used over the course of the entire digitization project, as it repeatedly asks *Why?* and then assists the reader in finding the best answers for their particular situation.

Of the five short chapters in this handbook, well over half concern the decision-making process. Planning and assessment are integrally woven throughout the topics of selection, digitization, metadata, archiving and preservation, and manipulation of image and text, and are central to the last chapter on project management. Handbooks generally suggest a how-to guide for a particular process, but it is unlikely that one would hold this book in hand while actively working through the myriad technology issues often encountered in digitization. For settling technology issues, digitizers may more successfully turn to Anne Kenney and Oya Rieger's authoritative *Moving Theory into Practice: Digital Imaging for Libraries and Archives* (RLG 2000) or to the growing number of guides and best practice manuals available on the Web. Or, they may be better served by the documentation accompanying their hardware and software.

*Digital Imaging* is not a manual of best practice, but it will challenge users to devise their best practice and it will be an invaluable reference for those who want to continually assess the progress of their project. Lee's book is a knowledgeable companion to be repeatedly consulted for the larger issues that will determine whether a project is successful and sustainable. For example, for those wondering about the merits of flat-file browsing over a searchable database, Lee repeatedly asks them to consider design from the users' perspective. The relative ease of creation of linked flat-files, he suggests, may not provide the user the accessibility that many have come to expect. Further, he suggests that the difficulty of maintaining and updating flat-files may present some long-term issues for the digital imaging project manager. Conceptual modeling is the strength of this newcomer to a growing list of digitization manuals. As Lee very accurately points out, digitization is often a very iterative process, requiring frequent reassessment. By foregrounding the conceptual model over the physical processes connected to

hardware and software issues, he has assured this handbook's continued relevance.

For the beginning practitioner who may need the scanning charts, the metadata mapping, and the costs and benefits spelled out, this is also a practical handbook. The section on time and costs, though sometimes difficult to translate into U.S. currency, is admirable in its thoroughness concerning these two critical elements of digitization. Few other guides are so detailed with regard to costs and time or so explicit in their discussion of in-house production versus outsourcing. This section alone is worth the book's rather steep price.

For managers attempting to make sense of the muddle of metadata, the cataloging levels defined by the Joint Information Systems Committee's Image Digitization Initiative included in Lee's book, provide a ready model for the organization of descriptive elements. Again, the cataloging focus is on the United Kingdom and the various conventions preferred in that milieu, but the discussion of SGML/XML and TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) and EAD (Encoded Archival Description) will help to bring clarity to this ongoing global discussion.

The generous appendix, with many links, will fill the need for specific references. Section B contains a series of excellent questions that will require the beginner and the institution to assess their readiness to embark on a digitization project. The section on the national and international context of digitization is informative, but the European perspective dominates, as it does in the lists of key players and organizations found in "Further Reading."

Overall, Lee's practical handbook is not a recipe that one follows to completion but, rather, an array of ingredients that may be joined in any of a variety of ways and that will satisfy on multiple levels. It is a handbook mostly for thinkers, but it will serve the doer admirably.—*Helen Wykle, University of North Carolina at Asheville.*