

Book Reviews

Lisa A. Ennis and Nicole Mitchell. *The Accidental Health Sciences Librarian.* Medford, N.J.: Information Today, Inc., 2010. 232p. Trade paperback, \$29.50 (ISBN 978-1-57387-395-6). LC 2009-51594.

The title of this book humorously and truthfully defines how most librarians enter the profession of health sciences librarianship. Most librarians do not begin their careers with plans to specialize in the health sciences, nor are many of them aware that health sciences librarianship even exists. A well-written foreword by Jean P. Shipman, former President of the Medical Library Association (MLA), clearly explains what this book covers and unveils what is in store for readers. She mentions that the book contains “numerous personal reflections that provide valuable guidance to those considering a career in health sciences librarianship.” It is these excerpts, written by health sciences librarians who share their journeys and experiences about how they developed their careers, that make this book so fun to read and easy to relate to. The authors, Ennis and Mitchell, are both health sciences librarians and have a wealth of useful knowledge to share. This book serves as an easy-to-read guide for current health sciences librarians as well as those considering entering health sciences librarianship as a career.

The first chapter begins by defining how broad health sciences librarianship is and what it encompasses. Specifically, it includes information professionals who work in all settings including academic libraries, veterinary libraries, health education centers, hospital libraries, and other types of organizations. Chapter 2 covers a brief history of the National Library of Medicine, the Index Medicus, Medical Subject Headings (MeSH), and other medical terminology. In chapter 3, the authors discuss how to provide effec-

tive reference services when responding to various types of questions that patrons might ask. Since patrons can include students, clinicians, researchers, as well as members of the general public, the importance of legal and ethical issues concerning questions about consumer health is emphasized. Other chapters talk about keeping up with technology and using social networking tools. In addition, various health science-related databases and resources, such as PubMed, MEDLINE, CINAHL, MD Consult, as well as PDA and evidence-based medicine resources, are listed with brief descriptions of what kinds of information they contain. However, the book does not delve into how to search these particular databases and resources. The final chapter discusses networking and associations, such as the MLA, and how health sciences librarians can use blogs, RSS feeds, and listservs to keep up to date with current information.

In the appendices, the authors include a survey they conducted of over 300 health sciences librarians throughout the country. The selected responses include comments on what health sciences librarians love about their careers and what challenges they are facing. Although the demographic and other survey data collected would have been interesting to see, this information was excluded from the book. The endnotes of each chapter are useful for readers to further explore each chapter’s topic. A list of selected health sciences library associations and their Web sites, as well as recommended readings for each chapter, are also provided at the end of the book.

As a health sciences librarian myself, this book has been informative and a joy to read. The authors provide many helpful tips, which make this book a good refresher for so many aspects of health



sciences librarianship. For those who are considering entering the field of health sciences librarianship, this book is worth reading and helps to better define what being a health sciences librarian involves. Overall, this book is definitely a valuable resource for anybody who is interested in learning more about health sciences librarianship.—*Judy P. Bolstad, University of California, Berkeley.*

Ian Cornelius. *Information Policies and Strategies.* London: Facet Publishing, 2010. 256p. alk. paper, \$99.95 (ISBN 9781856046770). NL015366895.

Ian Cornelius is at once attempting to deliver a theoretical guide to information policies while providing practical examples to help illustrate how these issues impact our everyday lives. It is important to note that he is not speaking only to information professionals but to anyone who might have an interest in how information is managed or controlled. Throughout the book, he attempts to draw the discussion into a broader, systematic analysis of information and the role it plays in contemporary society.

He shapes the foundation of his discussion with what amounts to an exploration of how we live in a world that is defined by information. His writing throughout this section is reminiscent of the kind of philosophical writing one might expect from a Marxist historian, but the entire text lacks any indication of supporting references for the conclusions he draws. Despite this omission, he begins with a brief survey of how information has contributed to, and even shaped, our society and uses this position as a backdrop of assumptions for the remainder of the book, attempting to demonstrate how each of the forthcoming areas he investigates influences the way in which we handle information policies.

While the first half of the book comes across as a theoretical essay with examples included to aid the reader in following the discussion, the second half goes in the opposite direction by taking practical issues faced by information professionals—cen-

sorship, privacy issues, freedom of information, and intellectual property—and enclosing them within his philosophical superstructure. By doing so, Cornelius is clearly drawing the reader furthering into his thesis that multiple external forces are constantly struggling for control of information and each is doing so for its own interest. Even though the examples throughout this second section will be familiar to the majority of professionals, it is the enclosure he builds to dissect these concepts that will likely prove difficult.

This pattern continues into the conclusion, which tries to account for the various gaps in previous chapters by examining how information policy is, or is not, handled in other arenas, such as nondemocratic societies. While he does provide insight into a cluster of areas that might be worth exploring, the evidence is still grounded in the philosophical with no effort to back up theoretical statements with cited material.

As a final notation, Cornelius suggests that we do need a unifying theory since the complex structures that provide or hinder our access to information are shaped by society. Ultimately, he does not advocate for a specific system; instead, he takes his time illustrating what he sees as the theoretical shape of information systems as they exist today and the elements that impact how we interact with them. Even though the history, sociology, and information science departments could no doubt use a systematic examination of information policies from either the historiography or methodological frameworks, *Information Policies and Strategies* will likely only benefit academic libraries that support library science programs, where information professionals can use it as a catalyst for developing concrete studies of how information policies are developed.—*Timothy Hensley, Virginia Holocaust Museum.*

Diane E. Peters. *International Students and Academic Libraries: A Survey of Issues and Annotated Bibliography.* Lanham,